

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

**NOTES ON THE LITERARY SITUATION
IN FRANCE**

by PHILIP TOYNBEE

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REFUGEES

by PETER RODD

SEPT JOURS EN HIVER

by EMMANUEL D'ASTIER

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE: A CENTENARY

by F. McEACHRAN

A MODERN PRIMITIVE

by E. MARY MILFORD

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHER—I

by EDOUARD RODITI

REVIEWS *by* ANNA KAVAN

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Edited by Cyril Connolly

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HORIZON

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ABOUT THIS NUMBER

PHILIP TOYNBEE's article was commissioned to give HORIZON readers as much concrete information as possible and should be contrasted with that of Emmanuel D'Astier which describes the French atmosphere of only a year ago when he was 'M. Bernard,' Head of one of the most important of the Underground Movements. He now edits the paper, *Liberation*. Colonel Rodd has had many years' experience with refugees. Edouard Roditi's 'Italo Svevo' is the first of a series of seven articles on the philosophy of novelists.

Next month HORIZON completes its fifth year and the Christmas number will include, as well as contributions by E. M. Forster and T. S. Eliot, an anthology of new poems specially edited for it by Stephen Spender.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

THE LITERARY SITUATION IN FRANCE

So many changes here in Paris, but happily they are only superficial. (White wine at 20 francs a glass and the politeness of the police. But the wine will soon be cheaper, and the police ruder.) During the first two hours here the changes were striking and disquieting, but afterwards it is the tough continuity of Paris which seems most remarkable. Above all the *Will to be Happy*. Here, where the irritable restrictions are twenty times more severe than the suspect restrictions of London, the people are twenty times more alive. This is no reflection on poor, war-weary, unliberated London, but it is a tribute to the effervescence of Paris. For more than a century and a half this city has been a spasmodic volcano, and now we are *en pleine éruption*. Not that the barricades are any longer up; not that the occasional shots at night are more than a wistful craving for action—but that Paris can dance and dispute and sing again. It is an intoxication without alcohol, an ecstasy without opium, almost a madness without psychosis. The air still vibrates with a half-incredulous sense of liberation. Posters show Marianne with her hand over her eyes, dazzled by the metaphorical radiance of freedom (the lack of literal illumination is one of the most severe impositions; most cafés are obliged to close at eight o'clock for absence of it).

But in the domain of French literature, the sense of resurrection is far less remarkable than the sense of continuity. For

an Englishman it is both humiliating and invigorating to discover that the creative energy of French writers has easily defied four years of clumsy Teutonic interdiction. There have been four principal methods of expression, which I give in order of literary importance, neglecting for the moment any political or spiritual consideration. First, and supremely the most important, has been the open publication of books and plays by writers who have been either consciously '*résistant*', or, in a few cases, strangely but magnificently aloof. Secondly, the fertile and by no means contemptible production of the collaborators, most notably of Montherlant, Drieu la Rochelle, Céline, Giono, Jouhandeau and Maurras. Thirdly, the clandestine publications—*Les Editions de Minuit*, *Lettres Françaises*, *Les Cahiers de la Libération* and *Les Etoiles*. Although these publications have included works by Mauriac, Vercors, Aragon, Sartre, Duhamel, Guéhenno and other writers of distinction, I rate them low in literary importance because their spirit was primarily combatant. Finally, certain books and reviews have been published in Switzerland and effectively smuggled into France. Of these the most important were probably Malraux's new novel, *La Lutte avec l'Ange*, and the reviews, *Cahiers du Rhône* and *Domaine Française*.

OPEN PUBLICATIONS BY POLITICALLY REPUTABLE WRITERS

It is no reflection either on the heroism of the clandestine writers (nearly all of whom published openly at the same time), nor on the savage philistinism of the Germans, to say that the most remarkable literary phenomenon of the last four years has been the energy, fertility and originality exhibited in the 'legal' publications. A distasteful comparison can hardly be avoided, for France has maintained at least twelve open literary reviews under the occupation. At Lyons and Marseilles have appeared the admirable *Confluences* and *Cahiers du Sud* respectively; at Grenoble, *Les Algues*; in Paris, *Le Livre des Lettres*, the relatively collaborationist *Cahiers Français* and, until 1943, the deformed *Nouvelle Revue Française* under Drieu. Also at Lyons, *L'Arbalète* and *Poésie*, 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944; at Montpellier, *L'Echo des Etudiants* and *Formes et Couleurs*; at Toulouse, *Pyrénées*; and in Algiers, *Fontaine*. The following quotations may give some indication of the free expression possible and practised in these reviews:

'En un temps où plus d'une nation se persuade, avec une vanité enfantine, qu'elle tient des contingences historiques de la terre ou du sang, la faculté mystérieuse d'édifier par ses seules ressources des valeurs supérieures à toutes les autres... il n'est pas inutile de rappeler que les écrivains et les hommes de pensée de nationalité française... loin de poser le problème humain en termes français, ont posé le problème français en termes de civilisation humaine... Une des conditions nécessaires pour que l'effort occidental vers l'universel puisse être poursuivi est la liberté de la France.'—Thierry Maulnier in *Les Cahiers Français*, April 1944.

'Je vous écris d'un pays autrefois clair. Je vous écris du pays du manteau et de l'ombre. Nous vivons depuis des années, nous vivons sur la Tour du pavillon en Berne. Oh! Eté. Eté empoisonné. Et depuis c'est toujours le même jour, le jour au souvenir incrusté... La mort prit les uns. La prison, l'exil, la faim, la misère prit les autres. De grands sabres de frisson nous ont traversés, l'abject et le surnois ensuite nous ont traversés. Qui sur notre sol reçoit encore le baiser de la joie, jusqu'au fond du cœur? On n'aime plus le jour. Il hurle. On n'aime plus la nuit, hantée de soucis. Mille voix pour s'enfoncer. Nulle voix pour s'appuyer. Notre peau se fatigue de notre pale visage.'—Henri Michaux in *Confluences*, December 1943.

J'ignore le sentiment des gens de quarante ans, et de cinquante; mais je dis, au nom de ceux qui en ont vingt, ou trente, que jamais génération ne s'est sentie moins solidaire de sa défaite, moins responsable, moins hypothéquée, moins marquée... Nous, nous sommes intacts. Et rien en nous agace comme ces auscultations lugubres sur la décadence de la race et le déclin de la France... Nous avons rouvert nos livres chers à la page marquée. Notre littérature, en ce qu'elle avait d'excellent, n'était-elle pas de moins en moins solidaire de tout ce qui nous a valu la guerre et la défaite? De ce fait, n'était-elle pas déjà sauvée?—Georges Mounin in *Problèmes du Roman* (Edition *Confluences*, May 1944).

It is worth emphasizing that these passages appeared not under the Vichy régime, but during the last frenzied months of the German occupation.

On the other hand Claudel's essays against anti-semitism were published in Paris during the early days of the occupation, and

immediately suppressed by the Germans. Similarly the famous *Poésie et Vérité* of Eluard was sold openly in Paris for one week of 1942, and then discovered and suppressed. This volume contained the poems *Douter du Crime* and *Couvre-Feu* both of which appeared in HORIZON, August 1943'.

Among the open and non-Collaborationist books which have appeared since 1940, the following would appear to be the most notable:

Aragon's *Crève-Cœur* and *Le Voyageur de l'Impériale*. Aragon has now returned to Paris and is editing the Communist paper *Ce Soir* (Eluard and Picasso are also now both Communists).

St-Exupéry's *Pilote de Guerre*. St-Exupéry was killed a few weeks ago in an air fight, but details are not yet known.

Valéry's *Variété V*, *Tel Quel I & II*, and *Mauvaises Pensées*. Valéry has remained aloof from the maelstrom of occupation and resistance except for his oration (in private session) on Bergson. He has always detested Bergsonian philosophy, and the gesture was gratuitously anti-German. The essays of *Variété V* are all written in the crystal isolation of his incomparable prose. Of the few books which I have been able to read here, this was in many ways the most moving as well as the most impressive. Valéry is now writing three Fausts at the same time, a realization of his (expressly anti-Flaubertian) dogma that everything can be done in an infinite number of different ways.

Gide's *Interviews Imaginaires* (translated and reprinted in HORIZON at the time of their first appearance), and *Conférence sur Henri Michaux*. A few pages of Gide's 1940 and 1941 Journal appeared in *Le Figaro* some days ago, a vivid picture of distress hardening into resolute opposition.

Thierry Maulnier's *Lecture de Phèdre*. Maulnier, conservative and traditionalist, has maintained something of Valéry's aloofness. His article on French civilization (passage quoted above) may be taken as the equivalent, both in its courage and its uniqueness, of Valéry's oration on Bergson.

Paulhan's *Les Fleurs de Tarbes*, a highly praised book of literary criticism. Paulhan, editor of the N.R.F. during its reputable pre-war years, has been extremely active in the clandestine movement.

Michaux's *Labyrinthes* and *Exorcismes* (see Poetry below).

Eluard's *Sept Poèmes d'Amour en Guerre*, *Poésie et Vérité*, and *L'Honneur des Poètes* (see Poetry below).

Sartre's two plays, *Les Mouches* and *Huit-Clos* (see *Theatre* below). Sartre has been active in the clandestine movement, but, independently of this, his literary stature has increased immensely since 1940 (see *Tendencies* below).

Michel Leiris's novel *Haut-Mal*. Leiris, active in the clandestine movement, is a former surrealist and now a member of Sartre's group.

Albert Camus's novel *L'Etranger* and play *Le Malentendu*. Like Leiris, Camus is a member of Sartre's group and was active in the clandestine movement.

Queneau's novel *Pierrot mon Ami*. A former surrealist, Raymond Queneau is at present director of the Radio Littéraire.

Colette's *Le Képi*. This collection of stories shows no trace of any decline in her talent.

Jean Prévost's *La Création chez Stendhal*. Prévost was killed in the Maquis three weeks ago. As well as being a leader of active resistance, he has published a great many articles in the open Press since 1940. The loss of this enthusiastic and intelligent writer has been severely felt in France.

Elsa Triolet's *Le Cheval Blanc* and *Mille Regrets*. Aragon's wife, she has been as active as her husband in the clandestine movement. Schlumberger's *Jalons* and *Nouveaux Jalons*.

Lanzo del Vasto's *Le Pèlerinage aux Sources*, a philosophical rejection of the West in favour of Indian mysticism.

Finally, the four-hundred-page volume *Problèmes du Roman*, produced by Jean Prévost under the auspices of *Confluences*, gives an astonishing picture of critical activity. Contributors include Valéry and Cocteau (frivolous), Jaloux, Camus, Martin-Chauffier (shot by the Germans a few weeks ago), Prévost, Simenon, Tavernier, Gertrude Stein and Elsa Triolet. Those articles which I have read are fully as fascinating as their titles—*Proust ou le double 'je' de Quatre Personnages*; *André Gide ou le drame du Roman Pure*; *Mythologie de l'Adolescence dans le Roman Contemporain*; *Mauriac, Romancier et Moraliste*; *Montherlant ou le Roman Perpétuel*; *Le Temps et la Technique Romanesque selon Jean-Paul Sartre...*

Translation of all English or American books published since 1850 was effectively forbidden. This permitted, however, a magnificent translation of *Moby Dick* by Pierre Leyris (the provençal collaborator, Jean Giono, accompanied it with a

tribute, *Pour Saluer Melville*); De Quincey's *Essays*, one of Hawthorne's early novels, and, among foreign books, Kafka's *Great Wall of China*. Less comprehensibly, it permitted the translation by *Confluences* of the most recent section of Gertrude Stein's *Autobiography* and Lawrence's *Reflections on the Novel*. Previous translations of *Ulysses* and *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* have been reprinted. There has also been a new translation of *The Way of the World*.

OPEN PUBLICATIONS BY COLLABORATIONIST WRITERS

In this political camp (it has shown no particular sign of developing into a literary camp) there has been vigorous activity with a few admirable results.

Montherlant's two plays *La Reine Morte* and *Fils de Personne*. These are probably the most notable achievements of the collaborationists (see *Theatre* below). Montherlant's novel *Solstice de Juin* has been the most expressly pro-Nazi of all the literary works which have appeared under the occupation.

Céline's novel, *Guignol's Band*, dealing with the *bas-fond* of pre-war London. This is said to be typical of its author, unreadable to most readers, greatly admired by a few. Céline has also written a volume of essays, *Les Beaux Draps*.

Marcel Jouhandeau's *Nouvelles Chroniques Maritales*. After reading a few pages of this book I begin to suspect that Jouhandeau is far too little known in England. He is a perfectionist, writing his intimate memories in a style of great purity.

Drieu la Rochelle's novel, *L'Homme à Cheval*: echoes of Lawrence's *Mexico*. He has also published *Chronique Politique*, an attempt to justify his political past. It is believed that Drieu attempted suicide a few days before the liberation.

Maurras has collected his literary essays of the last twenty years.

Giono produced a play, *Le Bout de la Route*.

Paul Morand a life of Maupassant.

The Comité National des Ecrivains has published a list of ninety-five writers with whom they will refuse to collaborate in future. But, with the exceptions noted above and three or four others, the list is composed entirely of journalists.

In addition there have been many translations of mediocre Nazi novels, notably the works of Junger and Carossa, and a scandalous *Anthologie de la Poésie Allemande* from which Heine

is excluded. The reviewer of *Les Cahiers Français* quotes this line from the Nazi poet Anacker, and gives it his ironic approval: 'Nun schmukt die Fahnen mit jungem Grün'. The shelves of German translations are the only obvious incongruity in the Paris book-shops.

THE CLANDESTINE PRESS

I doubt whether anyone here would claim that many works of literary importance were produced clandestinely under the occupation. Nor was this the intention of those who organized and wrote for the various secret publications. The intention was to prove that the great majority of French writers detested the occupation and were prepared to risk their lives for the liberation of France. No one who has studied *Les Editions de Minuit* or the clandestine numbers of *Lettres Françaises* could doubt that the proof was triumphantly made. But, with *Les Etoiles* and *Les Cahiers de la Libération* of the Zone Sud, these heroic enterprises were primarily a militant weapon battling against the militant weapons of the collaborationists (*Je suis Partout*, *La Gerbe*, *La Nouvelle Revue Française* and, alas, many more). Since the liberation of Paris, four open numbers of *Lettres Françaises* have appeared, principally occupied in recounting the moving and often almost incredible story of the clandestine Press, in denouncing past collaborators and in mourning the dead. It is impossible to recapitulate here the histories of the different secret publications. Around *Lettres Françaises* the following were grouped: Jaques Decour (virtually originator of the enterprise, a Communist schoolmaster of outstanding courage even in this circle of brave men, he was discovered by the Germans and shot in 1942); Claude Morgan and Debrû-Bridel (journalists), Jean Paulhan, Jean Prévost, Eluard, Aragon, Jean Blanzat, Michel Leiris, Edith Thomas, Sartre, Queneau, Camus, Guéhenno, Duhamel and, in a greater or lesser degree, at least a dozen more. That the clandestine printing press in Paris was three times discovered and destroyed by the Germans may give some small impression of the difficulties which these indefatigable men experienced.

Of *Les Editions de Minuit* much more is known in England. The identity of Vercors, whose contributions, *Le Silence de la Mer* and *La Marche à l'Etoile*, were among the most impressive, was unknown to all except three or four of his colleagues. He was

known to the other clandestine writers as M. Desvignes, 'homme modeste, scrupuleux, sensible, d'un désintéressement absolu', but M. Desvignes was not known as the author of *Le Silence de la Mer*. Even now *Lettres Françaises* have not thought fit to publish the name behind Desvignes (Jean Bruller). We know only that *Le Silence de la Mer* was the first literary work of this new and talented author.

A complete list of the *Editions de Minuit* may still be of interest:

- Le Silence de la Mer*, by Vercors
- La Marche à l'Etoile*, by Vercors
- A Travers le Désastre*, by Maritain
- Le Rapport d'Uriel*, by Benda
- Le Cahier Noir*, by Mauriac
- La Pensée Patient*e, by Thimerais
- Le Musée Grévin*, by Aragon
- Les Amants d'Avignon*, by Elsa Triolet (Madame Aragon)
- Angleterre*, by Debrû-Bridel ('Argonne')
- Contes*, by Edith Thomas
- Nuits Noires* (The Moon is Down), by Steinbeck
- Trente-trois Sonnets*, by Jean Cassou (written in prison)
- Le Temps Mort*, by Claude Aveline
- La Marque de l'homme*, by Claude Morgan
- Charles Péguy, Gabriel Péri*, preface by Vercors
- Les Bannis* (an anthology of banned German poetry)
- Toulon; le crime contre l'esprit*, by Aragon
- L'Armistice*, by Roger Giron
- Etude sur Montherlant*, by Blanzat

The four open numbers of *Lettres Françaises* which have appeared since the liberation suggest that this paper will remain the instrument of the more militant French writers. It is impossible that such combative figures as Claude Morgan and Jaques Debrû-Bridel will show any great sympathy for a return to 'pure' literature. They are the heirs to the social-realist tradition of pre-war years.

POETRY

With the exception of Eluard's *Poésie et Vérité* and the verse which appeared in the *Editions de Minuit*, all the French poetry of the last four years has been published openly. It is a wide and uncharted sea, and any judgements or comments that I make

must necessarily be even more hazardous than elsewhere. I write, however, largely on reliable instruction.

As in England there has been a profuse and varied production of poetry since 1940, and as in England few critics have yet dared to distinguish the sheep from the goats. An attempt has been made (as dubious, I suspect, as all such attempts at classification must be) to divide some of the younger poets into two schools—into the neo-romantic under the leadership of Aragon, and the neo-classicists under Eluard. In the first school have been grouped Loys Masson, Robert Morel, Luc Estang and (though older) Pierre Emmanuel. I quote from a poem by Estang which I have found pleasing, and which may give some indication of the movement.

L'Appel D'une ville sans nom bâtie au bord des neiges
Je me suis évadé vers toi qui m'appelais
Avec ta main ouverte comme un piège.

L'aube mettait le ciel en veilleuse, et j'allais
Pour t'aimer sur l'étang perdu dans les joncs tristes.
Mes pleurs et le vent ont brouillé les pistes.

Ah! les cœurs oublieux ne sont pas les moins fiers
Je veux que mon passé garde sa transparence
De jardin mort sous un soleil d'hiver.

Eluard, who is held in even greater respect than Aragon, has been marvellously productive since 1940. Like Aragon, he had abandoned previous obscurities for an extreme and crystal clarity. I am uncertain about the school of Eluard, though a few names were quoted to me which I had never heard before (no token, alas, that they were not well-known French poets).

Claudél, Valéry, Jouve and Supervielle are still the respected (though, as poets, relatively unproductive) masters of French poetry. The veteran symbolist, Saint-Pol Roux, was killed by the Germans in June 1940. Max Jacob died in a concentration camp, and the poet Politzer was shot some months ago.

A puzzling and important figure is Henri Michaux. Little known in 1940, although he had already published a number of books, he was introduced by Gide in that year and has since been claimed as the greatest living French poet after Valéry. His name is mentioned with something of the awe which aureoles

the name of Rimbaud, and in something of the same terms as those in which the worshippers of Henry Miller praise their master. Here are Michaux's *articles de foi*:

'J'écris avec transport et pour moi,

a) tantôt pour me libérer d'une intolérable tension ou d'un abandon non moins douloureux.

b) tantôt pour un compagnon que je m'imagine, pour une sorte d'alter-ego que je voudrais honnêtement tenir au courant d'un extraordinaire passage en moi, ou du monde, qu'ordinairement oublieux, soudain je crois redécouvrir, comme en sa virginité.

c) délibérément pour secouer le figé et l'assis, pour inventer.

Les lecteurs me gênent. J'écris, si vous voulez, pour le lecteur inconnu.'

Michaux's admirers claim that he is the most original poet of the century, the most accurate, the most perceptive and the least stylized. I can do no more than regret that I was obliged to mangle by quotation the beautiful prose poem from *Confluences* (see above) and to quote (on instruction) the following:

Clown. Un jour,

Un jour, bientôt peut-être,

Un jour j'arracherai l'ancre qui tient mon navire loin
des mers.

Avec la sorte de courage qu'il faut pour être rien et rien
que rien

Je lâcherai ce qui paraissait m'être indissolument proche.

Je le trancherai, je le renverserai, je le romprai, je le
ferai dégringoler.

D'un coup dégorgeant ma misérable pudeur, mes
misérables combinaisons
et enchaînements de fil en aiguille;

Vidé de l'abcès d'être quelqu'un, je boirai à nouveau
l'espace nourricier.

A coups de ridicules, de déchéances. (Qu'est-ce que la
déchéance?) par éclatement, par vide, par une totale
dissipation, dérision, purgation j'expulserai de moi
la forme qu'on croyait si bien attachée, composée,
coordonnée, assortie à mon entourage et à mes
semblables, si dignes, si dignes mes semblables.

Réduit à une humilité de catastrophe, à un nivellement
 parfait comme après une intense brouille
 Ramené au-dessous de toute mesure à mon rang réel, au
 rang infime que je ne sais quelle idée-ambition
 m'avait fait désertier.
 Anéanti quant à la hauteur, quant à l'estime
 Perdu en un endroit lointain (ou même pas) sans nom,
 sans identité
 CLOWN, abattant dans le grotesque, dans la risée, le
 sens que contre
 Toute lumière je m'étais fait de mon importance.
 Je plongerai
 Sans bourse dans l'infini esprit sous-jacent, ouvert à tous
 Ouvert moi-même à une nouvelle et incroyable rosée
 A force d'être nul
 Et ras
 Et risible.

A difficult poem for a foreigner to appreciate at a first reading. My own experience is that after five readings there is at least the beginning of understanding, and the suspicion of greatness.

Patrice de la Tour du Pin (now a prisoner of war in Germany) is important as the leader of a catholic and mystical school. Berrard, Cocteau and others greatly admire *Notre Dame des Fleurs*, by Jean Gene, a young Villonesque figure who has been several times to prison. My own choice is Jean Cayrol, young poet of Bordeaux.

Je veux ce port perdu que j'éveille en moi-même
 Tout doré par la lumière de cinq heures,
 Glorieux, de lourds vaisseaux dans la cendre du soir
 Et des femmes mangeant des fruits sans se hâter.

Ou bien ce port glacé par tant de mers qui passent
 (Un cadavre luisant fait tort aux voyageurs)
 Il a de froids bassins aux barques grasses
 Percées d'herbes, de coquilles, de fleurs
 Et qu'on trouve si belle pour un départ solitaire.

Où ce port du déluge où les eaux se retirent
 Où les poissons boueux sont mangés par les chats
 Où les ruelles sont pleines d'arbres morts et de navires;
 Une plaque d'eau mauve est gardée par les soldats.

THEATRE

The Germans appear to have interfered very little with the freedom of the Paris Stage, and there has been a varied and fertile dramatic activity. An important event was the production for the first time of Claudel's *Soulier de Satin*. This famous, but previously unactable, play was cut and edited for the stage by Jean-Louis Barrault; its success at the *Comédie Française* was enormous, and it appears to have attained an almost symbolic stature as a monument to the traditional spiritual identity of the French theatre. Earlier in the occupation Claudel's *L'Annonce faite à Marie* was produced, but of this I have been able to learn very little.

At about the same time as *Le Soulier de Satin*, a magnificent production of Giraudoux's new play *Sodome et Gomorrhe* was given in Paris (decor by Bérard). Giraudoux also produced two films under the occupation. His death earlier this year (there is a suspicion that he was poisoned by the Germans) has been bitterly felt. He had been watched so closely that his participation in the clandestine movement was impossible, but he was universally respected.

Cocteau has produced three new plays since 1940: they are described to me as follows: *La Machine à Ecrire*—‘sorte de résumé de tous les poncifs du théâtre de boulevard d'entre-deux-guerres, pastichés.’ *Renaud et Armide*—‘la plus belle pièce représentée à la Comédie Française sous l'occupation. Essai de moderniser la tragédie classique du 17^{ème} siècle.’ *Antigone*—‘belle pièce classique—musique d'Honegger.

Thus Cocteau would seem to have covered his whole known territory, from extreme frivolity to severe classicism. Like Giraudoux, he has also directed two ‘films poétiques’—*Le Baron Fantôme* and *L'Eternel Retour*.

In the classical school of Cocteau and Giraudoux a new dramatist has appeared since 1940, Jean Anouilh. His *Euridice* and *Antigone* are described to me as ‘deux transportations de mythes anciens dans l'époque moderne’ (which might indeed be suspected from the titles). His *Bal des Voleurs* is described as a kind of ballet—‘comédie où les gestes et les paroles se conditionnent réciproquement à un tel point qu'il est impossible de saisir l'un sans l'autre.’

Montherlant's two plays, *La Reine Morte* and *Fils de Personne* have both appeared in Paris during the last eighteen months. The first was a luxuriant and skilful eulogy of absolute power. *Fils de Personne* deserves, perhaps, a brief recapitulation. The hero, a liberated prisoner of war, returns to his 'family' in the unoccupied zone at the end of 1940. He finds a mistress, to whom he is indifferent, and his unknown son. The play revolves round the efforts, and final failure, of Georges to discover in his son some flame of greatness, or of creative vitality. Failing, he despatches wife and son to a northern city which is suffering from heavy aerial bombardment (the true manner of Costals). Even the most fanatical of the *épureurs* have granted Montherlant's great talent as a playwright, and the theme of *Fils de Personne* would seem to have suited it. From the reviews of these plays it doesn't seem that they could be described as more than crypto-fascist—'dans le sens de 1936'. He was always that. (*Solstice de Juin* was a different and far more disreputable matter.)

Giono, another collaborator, has produced *Le Bout de la Route*, of which I have heard nothing.

Probably the most sensational dramatic event of the period has been the development of Jean-Paul Sartre into a major playwright. His first play, *Les Mouches*, was produced about a year ago. Based on the theme of Orestes, it dealt with a moral problem which was both topical and profound: the right to kill. Has one the right to kill another man when the death of ten innocents will be the inevitable result? (Assassination by the Maquis—reprisals on hostages by the Germans.) Sartre's answer was an unequivocal but considered Yes. His second play, *Huis-Clos* is now being shown at the Vieux Colombier, where I saw it a week ago. I am tempted to describe it in detail, for it was a nearly perfect production, beautifully acted (by young and unknown actors), and austere produced. The scene is laid in Hell, a grim and windowless *Empire* room, furnished only with three chairs and an immense bronze. The hero, who is the first to enter, has tortured his wife for five years, deserted from the front and been shot for cowardice. He is quickly followed (he has hardly had time to bless, at least, his solitude) by a vampire-like Lesbian and a beautiful infanticide. This hell, cumulative in horror until the almost intolerable climax, is cruelly simple: 'L'enfer, c'est les autres'. Each of the three needs another in order

to be assured of his own existence (there is no looking-glass in the room and hand-mirrors have been removed from the ladies' bags). Each pair, in terrible rotation, must combine against the third in order to feel the solidarity of superior strength. The three have been carefully chosen for an eternity of mutual punishment. Hatred is insatiable—but silence is impossible. It is a remarkable play and one may hope that it will soon be shown in London.

Finally, there have been performances of *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, of *Candida* and *The Playboy of the Western World*.

TENDENCIES AND COMPARISONS

The rise of Sartre to his present position (among the five or six most discussed and most admired writers in France) is clearly of great, though in some ways obscure, importance. When he disappeared from our view in 1940, it was something of a distinction in England even to have heard of *La Nausée*. His stature is now great enough to maintain two accredited and respected disciples in the persons of Michel Leiris and Albert Camus. That this school derives in some sense from Kafka, that they purvey 'la philosophie de l'absurde' and that they have been somewhat portentously christened 'Les Existentialistes', is as much as I can safely write. There were certainly faint traces of Kafka in *La Nausée* and *Le Mur*; perhaps a stronger influence in *Huis-Clos*. Kafka is as much discussed in Paris today as he was in London ten years ago. The discovery appears to have come later, and with accumulated effect.

There would also appear (and it is only of appearances that I can possibly write in this section) to have been a certain 'retour à Péguy'. This was partially encouraged by the 'gens du Trafapa' (Travail, Famille, Patrie), but was also a very natural search for consolation in a great French writer and mystic. Mysticism, both Catholic (La Tour du Pin) and Indian (del Vasto) has captivated several young poets.

Proust, though republished under the occupation and admirably defended by Louis-Martin Chauffier¹ (since shot by the Germans), has suffered the inevitable reaction from yesterday's

¹ Chauffier once brilliantly parodied Proust's letters in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. His death is not absolutely certain.—Ed. HORIZON.

enthusiasm. I am told that he is often (and how curiously!) dismissed by young writers as a more vulgar Henry James. Henry James is greatly admired by these young writers, but hardly more than Pater! Hawthorne and Emerson have been resurrected in the wake of Melville, and I detect an exaggerated respect for Faulkner, Dos Passos and Caldwell. Grossly too little is known of the English writers of the inter-war period.

There is no school of Montherlant in the sense of literary imitation, but he has many disciples. One of them has written a book, with the provocative title, 'Montherlant—homme Libre'. This statement, incidentally, is literally and rather surprisingly true. Montherlant is still at large in Paris, and it seems improbable that any punitive measures will be taken against him or against any of the other collaborationist writers. Although no member of the *Comité National des Ecrivains* will write for any paper which publishes their works, there is nothing to prevent Céline, Montherlant and Giono from starting a separate review for ex-collaborationists. At the moment it would have little circulation, but this would not be for lack of talent.

The perennial spirit of French iconoclasm has recently aimed heavy blows at two Masters. In *Variété V*, Valéry launched a contemptuous shaft at Flaubert (La Tentation de Saint Flaubert) perhaps on the theory that one can strike most effectively at the enemy's (the novel's) strongest point.

'... vérité de médiocrité minutieusement reconstituée. . . . Le plus honnête homme du monde, et le plus respectable des artistes, mais sans trop de grace ni de profondeur dans l'esprit... hanté par le Démon de la connaissance encyclopédique... comme enivré par l'accessoire aux dépens du principal. . . .'

Among those easily effected by the variations of literary fashion it would certainly seem that Flaubert's reputation has never been lower. There is a horror of documentation, accompanied by a rather naïve suspicion of 'fervour'. (Astonishing to find that one of the principal literary conflicts is still between Catholics and free-thinkers, between *les Claudéliens* and *les Valériens*.) In *Salammbô* and *La Tentation* the more vigorous of the Valériens have discovered an offensive fervour. In the same circles *Le Grand Meaulnes* has also received a facile condemnation—'un beau livre pour les jeunes filles catholiques'.

But, as if by some comical and illogical adjustment of the

scales, Stendhal is now acclaimed as the greatest of all the great French novelists. Jean Prévost was the distinguished herald and leader of this enthusiasm. A common sentiment is 'Stendhal est dur; Flaubert ne l'est pas'.

It was as long ago as 1940 that Sartre launched his savage attack on Mauriac in the N.R.F., under the title, 'M. François Mauriac et la Liberté'. He accused Mauriac's characters of being imprisoned in the cages of artificial moral situations. He found no liberty of movement in the novels, and a rigidity of plot and moral. From the leader of the Avant-Garde, the attack was at least sensational. In any case the *Académie Française* lumbered vulnerably into action, and did little good to the cause of its distinguished member. From the school of Sartre no word is now too harsh for Mauriac as a writer, greatly and widely though he is admired as a patriot.

So far as public taste is concerned, *Gone with the Wind* is as popular here as anywhere else, and there is a passion for all the works of Charles Morgan.

★ ★ ★

I know that praise of France at the expense of England is a greatly hated activity. But after sixteen days in this astonishing Paris of September 1944, it is an activity which cannot honestly be avoided. In the literature of these four years France has been incomparable and undeniably superior, and it is only of literature that I am writing. I have tried to give a picture (and its inadequacy must be obvious) of a prodigiously varied, fertile and exploratory literature, defying a period of privations, obstacles and tragedies. It is almost agonizing to contemplate a French investigator's similar researches in London.

There remain some points of comparison and contrast which are less invidious. I note them quickly for the article must be finished in forty minutes.

The Surrealist Tradition

It is striking to be reminded how many modern French writers have either been explicitly surrealist in the past, or at least strongly influenced by surrealism. In England the influence has been negligible, and there was possibly less need for it. Yet to have passed through the school of surrealism seems to confer rich benefits.

The Classical Tradition

In the strangely formal poetry of Eluard; explicitly in Cocteau, Giraudoux and Anouilh; in the criticism of Thierry Maulnier and the novels of Mauriac. I can think of nothing comparable in England.

Literary Moralists

It may be partly the effect of the occupation that moral problems preoccupy French writers far more than English, Montherlant is confessedly and indeed obviously a moralist. Mauriac no less. Sartre and Cocteau are preoccupied in a wholly classical spirit with problems of right and wrong. Of Gide this goes without saying.

Literary Forms

Certain similarities here. In both countries the novel is at a low ebb, though France has the better excuse. The novel is too explicit an art-form to flourish in conditions where only the implicit can hope to survive. Also the novel has been more vigorously attacked in France (by Valéry, the Surrealists and Caillois), as well as defended (Alain and *Problèmes du Roman*). My private, and perhaps interested, belief is that a revival is probable in both countries.

In literary criticism France has the more distinguished war record (Maulnier, Paulhan, Valéry, Sartre and Blanchot).

French drama, no need to insist, is incomparably superior to anything now being produced in England. France has also been more productive in such literary forms as the essay (Valéry, Claudel, Schlumberger, Gide, Valéry Larbaud), and the journal (Gide, Green, Jouhandeau).

New and older poets have been prolific in both countries, and an award here would be untimely and absurd.

At least there is one certain and happy event in the immediate future, the breaking of the cruel barriers which have divided the world's two greatest literatures for so long. The joys and benefits of this mutual rediscovery are incalculable, and it may even be that these four years of isolation will lead to a more productive interchange of vision and imagination than ever before. As political world powers France and England have surely begun their period of decline. But, politically impotent and accepting their impotence almost as a blessing, why should they not save a barren world by the glories of a new artistic communion?

PETER RODD

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REFUGEES

BEFORE this war began there were probably more than 3,000,000 people in Europe alone whom persecution and the fortune of war, sometimes also natural cataclysms, had driven from their homes and their normal social and economic background, refugees in fact. Some were shut up behind barbed wire in their own countries, others hardly more lucky were ghettoed abroad. A more fortunate minority retained in exile a certain freedom of movement, but remained subject to various disabilities of status and economic opportunity.

The war has already added and will add many more millions to this nation of outcasts, but if international compassion remains as dormant as it did before, society's instinct for self preservation, alarmed at the multiplication of pieces which will not fit into its jigsaw pattern, has at last led to the foundation of an agency for handling the problem on a big scale.

The success of U.N.R.R.A. must of course depend to a very great extent on the political, financial and material support which the constituent governments are prepared to lend it, but if on the mechanical side of this gigantic operation it must remain very largely at the mercy of external agencies, there is one aspect of relief policy which it can and must handle alone, that of the moral rehabilitation and the psychological preparation of refugees for their return home or their resettlement in lands of new opportunity.

The problem of reintegration is not merely one of finding a place for these expatriate millions, and then providing them with a bun, a blanket and a travel warrant. Anybody who has been concerned with the care of refugees, the repatriation of prisoners of war, or even the military administration of soldiers returning from long service overseas, is aware that they suffer from profound and complicated emotional and psychic disturbances, which may in extreme cases turn them into permanent social misfits. The public at large is less aware of these problems because it has been suggested that to draw attention to them would embarrass the families of the victims, and their recovery might

be retarded if they themselves become conscious of their own abnormality. This convention of polite silence is, I believe, mistaken.

Frankness and public discussion would, for instance, have helped to overcome much of the resentment aroused in the reception areas by the behaviour of evacuees from London; since these too are subject in some degree to expatriate psychosis, as are children home for the holidays from boarding schools. If the public had recognized that fecklessness, dirtiness and cantankerousness, to mention only three of the symptoms of this condition, are no more normal characteristics of Londoners in this war than they were of Belgians in the last, but determined by environmental dislocation, sympathy would have stilled much of the resentment, and evacuation officials could have applied some of the remedial measures which the experience of relief workers has proved effective.

That the importance of this aspect of the relief problem has been recognized by U.N.R.R.A. I have not the slightest doubt. The trouble is that the study of expatriate psychosis is still in rather a rudimentary state. The War Office maintains a department of psychiatry for this among other purposes, but its terms of reference are of course limited to military subjects, and it has not had easy access to the data which might be supplied by the observation of relief officers. In any case relief workers, like myself, are generally laymen who need guidance in the collection of data and whose principal preoccupation must necessarily be the buns and the blankets. Nevertheless notes are compared and there has been a certain amount of discussion.

The stage that has been reached is a somewhat misleading agreement that a group of definite symptoms is common to refugees, exiles and prisoners of war, and that while some of these symptoms may be less marked in one individual than another, generally speaking they seem to occur together. They are:

1. Fecklessness and loss of initiative.
2. Difficulty in reconciling a fantasy-distorted picture of a familiar environment with its reality.
3. A form of social anxiety akin to but not identical with inferiority complex.
4. Loss or distortion of familiar criteria leading to inability to accept routine, sometimes also to depravity and lawlessness.

5. Cantankerousness which may take the form of brittle self-respect.
6. A tendency to cheat or defeat authority.
7. Readiness and willingness to co-operate with other victims in such deceit.
8. Bitterness.

There are also others peculiar to specific classes of expatriates and not necessarily associated with these more or less universal ones.

I have said that the grouping of these symptoms may be misleading because it tends to bring a study of their etiology to a dead end by emphasizing the highest common factor of all three classes of victims, the circumstantial fact of dislocation, which is then assumed to be the determinant of a specific psychic condition.

With deference, since I am no psychiatrist, I must confess that I am not satisfied with the simple explanation that some or all of these manifestations constitute a single complex which can be called expatriate psychosis or any other name which may be used to describe it.

Differences in the severity of the incidence of one or another of them and differences in the stages at which they occur are significant. The fact that some of them can successfully be abated without affecting the others is also important.

To venture an etiological conjecture since data from case histories are scrappy and I have had neither the opportunity nor the training to analyse them, I suggest that their association is possibly accidental and circumstantial, and that they in fact derive from several distinct psychic disturbances. At least three can be distinguished, and their characteristics separately grouped. They are those associated with:

- (a) The shock occasioned by the impact of dislocation.
- (b) Conditioning in an alien and abnormal environment.
- (c) Morbid condition of the social navel string.

Dislocation shock is usually delayed. As Londoners during the first and second blitzes have had an opportunity to observe, the first reaction to calamity is 'a stiff upper lip' and an adoption of artificial behaviour patterns precariously founded on slogans popularized by the headline conventions of modern journalism. Communities suffering from military defeat lose these patterns

with their headlines and shock sets in earlier if not immediately, but sooner or later shock sets in among all cataclysmically displaced people.

Two of the symptoms mentioned may, I think, be associated with this form of shock, the well-known refugee helplessness and the psychic indiscipline which refuses routine and tends to lawlessness.

In its early stages helplessness is usually met with a certain amount of social cossetting, the 'cups of tea in rest centres' attitude. This attitude can be and usually is maintained far too long. Among women, particularly in the working class, this pathological loss of initiative is associated with the loss of simple material possessions, such as a familiar frying-pan or work-basket. These material symbols naturally become more elaborate among people belonging to more complex social environments.

One of the remedies is the provision of substitutes. It is worth mentioning in this connection that while the transport and disposal of refugees' often unwieldy and only marginally useful material possessions presents tiresome administrative problems to relief organizations, they should whenever possible accompany their owners. A familiar if cracked teapot from the old home is a great deal more valuable than a nice new one at the other end.

In addition to substitution, a certain amount of chivvying and even bullying is recommended for this condition. A start can often be made by the issue of food and clothing in a raw or unfinished state. The preparation of food is the most elementary of the struggles for existence. These struggles should be multiplied until a normal mildly predatory competitive temper has been restored. Careful timing of these measures and a sympathetic approach are required. It is more dangerous to delay than to anticipate, especially as where people are living under institutional or camp conditions, this fecklessness is infectious and may become epidemic in the form of a collective, almost aggressive, inertia.

Just as the loss of material objects may induce helplessness, the loss of familiar social criteria may induce an attitude of moral slovenliness. In an alien society from which the exile feels himself excluded and in which his anomalous status usually prevents him from participating fully, the subjective sanctions governing his behaviour are weakened, and those of his temporary new environment not properly assimilated or understood. There seems to be no pragmatic basis for the strange routine. In the same

way as helplessness may in certain circumstances become epidemic and aggressive, this lack of psychic discipline may degenerate, among dispersed expatriates, into lawlessness, and among concentrated ones, into collective depravity.

Remedial measures are rather harder to take in this case because relief organizations, except by propaganda methods, cannot usually do much to control the environmental attitude on which so much depends. As far as the victims themselves are concerned the measures to be taken are analogous to those adopted for helplessness, that is to say substitution and a certain amount of chivvying. Where they can be applied they are as readily effective, which would seem to confirm the association of this characteristic with the shock group. In refugee concentrations it is not usually difficult to foster the growth of an *ad hoc* ethical system on the lines of a schoolboys' code of behaviour. Where the exiles are dispersed it is more difficult. If they can be found an economic or social function in the host community, the illusion of responsibility will generally lead to the adoption of most of the new environmental standards.

It must be noted that dislocation shock is liable to recur every time there is a sharp circumstantial contrast. I have not observed the development of any immunity from frequent changes. Displaced persons are as subject to it when they are first concentrated as when they are dispersed, when they first become exiles as when they are repatriated. As might be expected its incidence is most severe when there is little or no prospect of a return to familiar surroundings.

The groups of characteristics associated with conditioning in exile are the social anxiety, the tendency to conflict with authority and the ready collaboration with fellow exiles to defeat it; there is a large number of others as well, which are of greater interest to the psychiatrist than the relief worker. Some of them are determined by physiological condition, others are sexual. Generally speaking they are specific to the individual conditioning environment.

Since the psychic condition from which these symptoms derive is the product of a lengthy and sustained process, such remedial measures as can be applied are correspondingly slow to operate, unlike those which have been suggested for the condition of shock. It is moreover extremely important that the process

of 'deconditioning' be kept as unobtrusive as possible, and be not accompanied by any coercive or chivvying practices.

Social anxiety is manifested as a hypersensitiveness about ignorance of current social habits, institutions and personalities, and a fear of saying or doing something that might excite ridicule or suspicion, or even disclose the fact that the victim has been a refugee or an exile. Most people suffer from it in a mild form when they go abroad. It may become fantastically acute among people who have been living under camp conditions for any length of time, particularly if on release they find themselves, not abroad, but at home.

The tendency to conflict with authority is of course generally due to the fact that such authority as they have encountered while expatriate has been alien and hostile. Even when it has not been hostile in a belligerent sense, it has usually appeared tyrannical, partly because the moral foundations of its activities have been imperfectly understood, and partly because it has almost in every case imposed on exiles a status involving disabilities as compared with the native community. The adjustments and subterfuge which exiles feel themselves justified in using to maintain their self-respect in the face of their alien neighbours, breed at first an antagonism to the authority to which they are subject while expatriate, and later to all authority as such.

The tendency to collaborate in intrigue with fellow sufferers follows as a corollary to this attitude, but is also in part due to their exclusion from the public or administrative activities of the community in which they have been living. When after their return home they find that such participation while formally open to them is in fact just as inaccessible, they develop a compulsive need to create special communities, secret organizations and the like which will provide an outlet for this urge.

The only effective method of dealing with this group of symptoms is to place the people affected in specialized communities for education and reconditioning before dispersal and repatriation. There should be no great difficulty about this since for purely mechanical reasons the movement and administration of large masses can generally most efficiently be carried out by concentrating them first. Even where this is not the case it would still be worth doing for the purpose of rehabilitation alone (while mechanical considerations could be used as an excuse).

Obviously the management of such communities is a matter requiring a great deal of insight and experience on the part of the relief staff. It is not possible to prescribe a single pattern or educational curriculum suitable to all cases. These will depend on case histories, at least of groups if not of individuals, and it will be necessary to proceed empirically. The relief officials will be required to possess a fairly intimate knowledge of the conditions under which their charges will have to live after repatriation, but they must also know much more than most of them now do about the effects of psychic conditions and the methods of social therapy, much more in fact than anybody at all, relief workers or not, now know about them.

The third group, that which is associated with what I have described as the 'morbid condition of the social navel string' includes the persistence of phantasy distorted personal traditions and memories, the bitterness and the cantankerousness of exiles and refugees.

The relationship of individuals to the society in which they live is too complex a subject to be discussed here. The adjustment is a delicate one, and if it is disturbed the life of the victim becomes one long misery until it is restored. Mere geographic absence alone, even for prolonged periods, does not necessarily upset the balance. The rhythm of psychic development in an individual can for a long time keep step with the rhythm of the community to which he belongs even without contact through the written and spoken word, sometimes even better for the lack of them, since as often as not the narrowness of the fields they can cover misplaces emphasis. There may and will probably be some fading of memory, but if the social 'navel string' is healthy the absentee will not have much difficulty in picking up the threads again on his return.

This rhythm of development is distorted and broken, not by mere absence from normal environment, but by the positive impact of the circumstances of exile which take the place of and elbow out the old. The disturbance is more serious than that occasioned by conditioning which results in a set of reflexes which are more or less useless or unsuitable in the repatriate's home town. It may not be accompanied by any behaviour pattern at all, but it is accompanied by acute mental anguish. Restored to his home the victim finds all the bulges and dents in the wrong places, and since they are recent bulges and dents acquired in exile they are probably still painful and bruised. Memory which

notoriously favours the agreeable at the expense of the unpleasant is not even a very reliable guide to where the old ones were, and the chances are in any case that they have moved since the community itself is not static.

Readers will I hope forgive this orgy of mixed metaphor. The only other way of referring to these phenomena is by the use of psychiatric technical terms which I am almost sure to use incorrectly.

There is little that a relief officer can do to remedy this trouble except to create the conditions in which the psychiatrist's treatment has the best chance of succeeding, and ensure that the reception authorities are aware of the nature of the disorder and are not too clumsy in handling it. Unlike the disturbances produced by shock the effects of this disorder are far less serious where the old environment is so completely and obviously changed that the repatriate is reconciled beforehand to the necessity of creating a new one for himself. In fact even where this is not actually the case it is always as well to stress what change there has been. In this way the victims will begin to treat the environment to which they return as a problem to be tackled and cease to regard themselves as a problem for the environment to tackle.

It is probable that further study will isolate and define other disturbances than the three I have mentioned in this rather superficial analysis, but I hope I have said enough to draw attention to the great volume of human misery which may result from a failure to appreciate any but the purely mechanical side of the refugee problem.

Further research is needed, possibly by a joint body of specialists and the relief workers who will ultimately have to implement its recommendations. But the greatest need of all is for the public to be made aware that the social and even political consequences of failing in the psychological rehabilitation of the gigantic mass of exiles which the war has created, may be at least as serious as a failure to feed them.

EMMANUEL D'ASTIER

SEPT JOURS EN HIVER

(Londres, Lyon, Châlons—décembre 1942)

Lundi

Quand j'ai été la chercher au Ritz, elle parlait avec deux hommes. L'un d'eux m'avait connu en France au temps des caprices et des contingences. Avec sa main moite, son contour flou et son entêtement mondain, il était de ceux qui n'ont pas d'emploi dans un temps d'apocalypse. Craignant qu'il ne me reconnût, je m'adossais à un pilier, surveillant dans les glaces et attendant qu'elle le quittât. Elle avait un visage de fatalité, un masque. En parlant elle n'animait aucun des ses mots. Elle pensait au départ.

Dans la rue, marchant à mes côtés, elle regardait la lune qui était tranchée au premier quartier, et elle dit :

—Ce soir je la hais.

Depuis deux mois elle vivait de lune. Cette lune qui lui dispensait l'angoisse et la joie, dont les phases ouvraient et terminaient la saison des voyages secrets vers la France ou hors de France. Cette lune nous ramenait à celle de novembre, où du premier au dernier quartier, chaque jour avait été le seuil d'un départ, où j'avais fait déjà trois voyages au-dessus de la France sans pouvoir m'y poser.

Ainsi nous avons été heureux, deux mois, d'un bonheur menacé. Et ce soir la menace est si bien précisée que le paysage qui était le décor de ce bonheur n'en est plus que la mémoire.

A Warwick Avenue, nous faisons quelques pas le long du canal, où l'eau reflète à peine et ne livre rien, où regne cette paix froide et cette odeur de moisi qu'on trouve à certaines rues d'eau de Rotterdam, Kay porte Pistache, sa chienne, dans ses bras. Le temps est si précieux—cette dernière nuit qui nous appartient—et si lourd, que nous cherchons à la fois à le perdre et à le retenir.

Après avoir diné chez la Norvégienne, nous rentrons. Mrs. Stowe—la gouvernante irlandaise—dont la dignité et l'humeur fantasque ont des rapports certains avec le whisky, a senti ce soir que sa tyrannie est impuissante devant nos peines. Elle reçoit, avec cette complaisance que donne le malheur d'autrui, les amis

qui viennent me dire adieu. Il y a Nef, mon compagnon de retour, Anna la chanteuse, Jef le faiseur de contes, il y a Pierre qui revenant de France pendant huit jours a vomi sa bile auprès de moi au dalot d'une felouque portugaise en Méditerranée, il y a d'autres compagnons de la vie secrète . . . Anna gratte sur sa guitare les notes d'une complainte encore sans paroles, et qu'elle vient de composer. L'alcool et la nostalgie aidant, nous tirons à deux ou trois les mots des notes:

Les Allemands étaient chez moi
On m'a dit: 'Résigne-toi',
Mais je n'ai pas pu
Et j'ai repris mon arme

Personne ne m'a demandé
D'où je viens et où je vais
Vous qui le savez
Effacez mon passage

J'ai changé cent fois de noms
J'ai perdu femme et enfants
Mais j'ai tant d'amis
Et j'ai la France entière

Anna chante, Kay suit d'autres images et d'autres mots, le visage tourné vers le feu de charbon, les yeux élargis:

Un vieil homme dans un grenier
Pour un jour nous a cachés
Les Allemands l'ont pris
Il est mort sans surprise

Hier encore nous étions trois
Il ne reste plus que moi
Et je tourne en rond
Dans la prison des frontières

Le vent souffle sur les tombes
La liberté reviendra
On nous oubliera
Nous rentrerons dans l'ombre

A une heure ils sont partis. Kay, plus blanche, dont tout le sang s'est retiré aux lèvres, s'endort sur mon épaule, tandis que la miroir à trois faces me renvoie ses trois visages, séparés de sa vie.

Mardi

Ce matin là, Kay n'y croyait plus. Un brouillard, qui sépare la maison du reste du monde, est tombé pendant la nuit. Le *fog* dont l'odeur souffrée vous monte aux narines et qui se frotte à vous avant de vous escamoter. A 10 heures, il passe du gris au jaune.

Elle n'y croit plus, et pourtant la voiture qui doit m'emmener vient à 2 heures. Elle a des façons de somnambule, une somnambule dont le réveil serait des larmes. Elle multiplie ce geste que je lui connais si bien et qui consiste à toucher furtivement un objet du bout des doigts, puis à porter ses mains à ses lèvres. Quand la voiture démarre je vois soudain au rez-de-chaussée son visage, décomposé, brouillé par la vitre de l'imposte, comme par une eau. Son sourire est une grimace, et ses cheveux flottent sur sa tête de noyée, en longues boucles au gré d'un courant fait de vitres déplacées et de larmes retenues.

A 20 km. de Londres, le brouillard se dissipe. Nef est auprès de moi. Nous commençons à parler boutique, sans passion, car nous sommes encore mal réinstallés dans nos nouvelles personnes.

Au terrain sur le seuil des barraquements, Sagesse, prince des atterrissages nocturnes, nous accueille. Après le repas dans la grande salle, tandis que les pilotes discutent des chemins, des points de passage ('Entre les îles et la côte occidentale...' 'Non entre la Vire et l'Orne...' 'Passer à 150...' 'Pour la flak oui, mais les mitrailleuses...'), Sagesse procède au rituel des vêtements et de la pharmacie.

Après une demi heure d'explications et de manœuvres, Nef et moi sommes transformés en scaphandriers à tête d'homme, affublés d'un gilet de sauvetage, d'un parachute, d'un canot pneumatique et de consignes inextricables qui doivent nous faire oiseaux, poissons ou héros.

La pharmacie, elle comprend: le cachet de cyanure pour la mort rapide, la benzedrine pour lutter contre le sommeil, la morphine pour affronter la souffrance, enfin les aliments condensés sous forme de petits cubes de toutes les couleurs pour le cas où nous voudrions jouer les Robinson.

Une fois dans l'appareil avec les armes, les postes de radio et les bagages, nous sommes si bien coincés, Nef et moi, qu'il n'est pas question de déplier une jambe, de lever un bras, de tirer sur la poignée du parachute, à plus forte raison de sauter pour utiliser tout l'attirail que nous avons sur le dos.

Nef entonne son chant favori 'Tu appartiens au lendemain'. Je le devine car je vois bouger ses lèvres mais je n'entends rien, seulement dans mon casque les derniers appels de la terre au pilote.

J'ai dormi une heure. Le coude de Nef et les voltes de l'appareil me tirent du sommeil. L'avion est une mouche prise dans un faisceau de projecteurs qui nous aveuglent et dont les pinceaux portent de balles tracantes.

Mercredi

Nous avons survolé la France en vain pendant dix heures, creusant des brumes pour trouver la Loire, cherchant Orléans et trouvant Blois, perdant Châlons dans un nuage—tantôt voyant fuir à 50 mètres les près et les forêts, tantôt escaladant les promontoirs blancs pour retrouver un ciel.

A la fin, ni l'alcool ni la peur ne nous rechauffaient plus, ni le feu d'artifice de ce qu'ils appellent la 'flak', ni le vol d'un chasseur ennemi, distrait de nous par la trace d'un plus gros gibier—les bombardiers descendant Sud.

Au retour j'étais le froid; le froid claquant des dents dans l'air, tandis que le pilote demandait l'accès au terrain désigné d'un dôme de projecteurs; sur terre dans une voiture filant sur Londres; dans mon lit devant ce miroir à trois faces où s'agitaient trois longues guêpes bleues—Kay comme une folle... le froid sous un monceau de couvertures, jusqu'au sommeil.

A 2 heures d'après-midi, je fais ma rentrée en scène pour la seconde tentative de cette lune.

Tous mes gestes comme un habillage avant l'entrée en scène: le revolver ici, le pansement et la lampe dans la poche gauche; là, le cyanure et la montre; enfin la substitution des papiers français, de l'argent et du tabac français, des tickets de métro... les accessoires de l'autre vie. C'est la cinquième répétition. Malparti, le petit officier brun aux yeux de biche et Smithson le Major qui parle anglais avec un accent parisien, s'affairent en-bas et débitent comme des calicots leur mètre d'opérations sur la France. Il n'y a que la scène de l'adieu qui reste trouble et vraisemblable, comme si on ne pouvait l'apprendre entièrement et qu'on improvisât toujours.

Cette fois Sagesse mène. Le temps est encore médiocre, notre mauvaise chance devient légendaire, aussi prend-il l'affaire en

maines lui-même. Sur cette sauterelle, qui s'appelle Lysander comme une fée, dans laquelle il n'y a aucun robot pour se substituer à l'homme imparfait, seul joue l'instinct du pilote. Sagesse, avec son flair sans égal, a filé droit de notre terrain sur l'île britannique pour percer la côte au seul point vulnérable, entrer dans un coton insoluble à tout autre, sortir du brouillard au Creusot, en se jouant là du feu de la terre et d'un chasseur de nuit dont les flèches vertes ne peuvent atteindre la sauterelle impudente que Sagesse conduit à saute-mouton sur les forêts et les collines, pour se poser enfin, à un quart d'heure près, sur ce pré de Saône, grand comme un mouchoir de poche, où clignotent dans la brume trois feux que ni Nef ni moi-même ne percevions.

Jedi

A minuit et demi, l'appareil posé sur le pré, je me trouvais debout sur le siège arrière, enveloppé du vent de l'hélice et du son des moteurs, en train de passer à une chaîne de bras tendus les bagages, les armes, les postes radio, tandis que s'agitaient des ombres. Nef, en bas, embrassait l'une d'elles.

Je saute à terre entre deux ombres inattendues—mon frère et Yvon—qui s'apprêtent à prendre les places de Nef et de moi-même. Des accolades dans le vent et le fracas, tandis que nous hurlons des noms, des recommandations, un adieu, et sept minutes après le premier contact au sol, nous regardons une ombre sur le ciel. Sagesse envolé.

Sur la lisière du pré, un arbre, une haie, un fossé s'animent. Dans un chemin creux qui sent la glaise et le bois mouillé, une caravane se forme, précédée et protégée sur ses flancs par les mitraillettes et les revolvers d'un groupe franc. Des chuintements de chats huants alertent les guêters aux carrefours. Joe, qui est le patron de l'équipe et d'un bistrot qu'il néglige, pose ses pieds dans les flaques d'eau et soliloque:

—Pour votre frère ce sera 'le charbon de bois est à la hausse', pour Yvon 'le pêcheur a rêvé'... on entendra demain... ça fait 5 fois qu'on vient sur le terrain, et votre frère ce n'est pas le genre qui reste inaperçu...

—Faut se grouiller: avec la feldgendarmerie à Loubans, il y aura de la patrouille tout à l'heure.

Gardendieu est en état de siège; le fromager, un cultivateur, deux journaliers, l'instituteur dirigent les opérations. Un sentier

qui longe un mur, des grands charmes, un chien qui gronde.
‘Tais-toi, bourrique’. Nous sommes au Château.

C’est bien la France.

Trois vieilles filles, qui nous appellant tantôt ‘ces Messieurs’, tantôt ‘nos parachutistes’—Marie-Jeanne, Marie-Joseph et Marie-Solange—des housses sur les meubles, des vitrines où se pressent deux siècles de bibelots. Marie-Solange, la bejamine et l’espiègle—54 ans—(qui dit ‘zut’ et que gronde Marie-Jeanne: ‘Tu pourrais dire flûte... enfin ce soir!’) nous sert du madère et des biscuits. Les trois Maries s’asseoient, se lèvent, trottent, caquetent...

—On vous a attendus hier soir...

—Le fromager est un chic type, mais il a eu tort.

—Moi, je le répète, le fromager, c’est le chef, on lui obéit.

—Il est 7 heures, ces Messieurs ont sommeil.

—Ne parlons pas du curé, on sort pendant le sermon pour bien marquer...

—Tu as bassiné les lits?...

—Les casques à pointe, hier...

—Mais Marie-Jeanne, ils n’ont plus de pointe...

—Tu veux toujours avoir le dernier mot, moi, je les appelle des casques à pointe...

Il y a eu des ennuis. Les liaisons sont rompues entre le département et la région. Berthe, l’amie d’Yvon, qui a certains contacts à Lyon, se met à ma disposition. Nous prenons le train ensemble. Il me semble l’avoir déjà rencontrée. Elle m’explique:

—J’étais plongeuse au Restaurant de la Tête d’Or, je servais quelquefois quand vous y veniez...’

Dans notre compartiment, côté fenêtres, il y a deux Allemands, si naturellement empesés dans leurs capotes vertes d’officiers qu’ils ont l’air d’acteurs russes jouant l’armée allemande. Côté couloir, Berthe me dit à voix haute:

—Comment c’est Londres? On y mange bien? ...’

Il faut croire que malgré les liaisons coupées les nouvelles volent. Aux Brotteaux, à la sortie des voyageurs, dans la foule, je reconnais trois, quatre, six visages amis: Jeannette redevenue blonde, que j’avais quittée brune pour échapper à son signalement et qui me touche la main, Arnaud et sa femme, Anne, dont la tension est trop basse, qui s’évanouit de la façon la plus soudaine

dans une rue ou dans le couloir d'un train et qui s'affaïse pliant les jambes comme Anna Pavlova dans la Mort du Cygne. Ils chuchotent 'Bonjour Bernard' et disparaissent. Maurice, ombre de lui-même, sur lequel brûlent toujours des cheveux rouges, passe et murmure 'Lâche Berthe, et suis la Canadienne qui remonte le Boulevard des Brotteaux. . . .'

C'est un peuple clandestin, un peuple de fantômes. Je suis repris dans la ronde, dans le grand jeu enfantin et mortel. N'est-ce pas l'enfance, ce jeu que l'on craint et que l'on aime, où tant de camarades sont des frères qui cherchent les secrets d'une terreur, d'un chemin, d'une retraite ou d'une mort?

Ce soir, à la nuit tombante, ces ombres je les aime comme je n'ai jamais aimé mes frères, à ce point où l'amour touche votre corps. Et dans Lyon, je suis la Canadienne. Je ne verrai jamais son visage. Sa nuque et son dos comme une armoire me précéderont dans une boutique, où elle s'évanouira en présence d'un lunettier qui me parlera dioptries pour tromper un client, une grande personne qui est hors du jeu. . . .

Lyon, que je croyais détester, me touchera de sa grâce, celle des filles laides et secrètes, à qui, un jour, les lorgnons retirés et les bandeaux défaits, découvrent des beautés: ce troupeau de maisons de la Croix Rousse au Rhône qu'une lumière révèle, ces allées aux dalles grises où l'odeur nauséabonde des latrines fait soudain place dans une cour fermée à l'odeur du linge qui sèche.

A minuit, nous sommes réunis à sept dans une maison accrochée à l'un de ces virages près de la Ficelle, à pente si raide que l'entrée de derrière est de plein pied au 3^{ème} étage. Sept autour d'une table, d'une douzaine de fillettes de Beaujolais et d'une tome de Savoie. Père des Peuples préside, inégalable au vin, à l'historiette, d'une clairvoyance patiente où se rencontrent les esprits mêlés de Rivarol et d'un vigneron pouillassin.

Tandis que se confrontent la France clandestine et la monde extérieur d'où je reviens, Ravachol, lui, se passionne pour le cadeau que je lui ai rapporté, un pistolet silencieux qu'il appelle une trompette bouchée et Maurice, pessimiste, proteste: 'Causez moins fort. C'est pas le moment.'

Vendredi

Cela ne va pas; il y a de la casse, et comme chaque fois, on cherche le mouton, ou bien on coupe la fatalité en quatre. La

Gestapo a mis la main sur notre imprimerie à Saint-Etienne, les brigades spéciales ont fait une descente à notre mercerie et emmené Françoise. Seul, le transport d'armes, grâce à Raymond, a admirablement réussi. 175 tonnes que livraient de mauvais gré les camoufleurs de l'Armée de l'Armistice sont passées dans nos caches. Le bruit court pourtant que deux camions arrêtés par des patrouilles allemandes entre Avignon et Montélimar, ont tenté de forcer le passage, mais qu'au barrage suivant les conducteurs ont été abattus.

J'ai perdu trois logements dans l'histoire de la parfumerie qui était un de mes relais. On attend la suite.

J'ai erré au douzième étage d'un gratte-ciel à Villeurbanne, guettant le résultat des négociations d'Anne, mais les planques sont ou fermées, ou pleines ou menacées.

Après avoir traîné tout le jour autour de Lyon, nous finissons chez le Philippin, où Anne épuisée s'évanouit discrètement à la cuisine. On la retrouve en tas, un quart d'heure plus tard si profondément enfoncée dans sa syncope, si transparente, qu'il faut la traiter comme une noyée, pour ramener le sang aux membres.

Sauf la saison, tout est en place ici: l'île Barbe et la Saône et le bruit de son écluse, la simili-poterne style 1900, avec son escalier en colimaçon—l'escalier des faux pas; le bout de terrain clos de mur et qui veut jouer au parc, avec son cèdre, ses trois ormes et ses deux massifs. Je l'avais quitté en été: maintenant le gazon a perdu ses scabieuses et ses marguerites, comme les ormes leurs feuilles. Mais je retrouve la grande maison si laide, si pleine de riens, où tout est dépareillé.

Pourtant le rêve habite ici sous la poussière du parquet, dans le cri du gravier sous les pas. Peut-être parce que dans cette demeure d'un Lyonnais grippe-sous s'ébroue cette race anarchique, généreuse et fantasque des Philippins; peut-être aussi parce que, pour moi qui ne reste jamais nulle part, c'est un lieu familier où quelques semaines éparses ont recréé l'habitude, absente de ma vie.

Je retrouve la grande salle, au poêle longuement tuyauté, où l'on mange souvent comme une armée en déroute—fayots trop durs et pommes germées—mais où de temps à autre on festoie de tabac et de vin, grâce aux bassesses que font Philippine pour le tabac, Philippin pour le vin.

Je retrouve le placard surprise, de la troisième chambre du premier étage qui contient le trésor de la maison, c'est à dire l'eau courante—un robinet et un évier.

Je retrouve la Philippine qui m'appelle Lundi. Le 'nommé Lundi', parce que je suis arrivé chez elle un lundi, avec un collier de barbe, blanche sous le menton, noire aux joues, une houppelande et un air de conspirateur si provocant qu'aucune police au monde ne pouvait me prendre au sérieux . . . Philippine qui est, avec un esprit clairvoyant et parfois révolté, la bonne à tout faire de toutes les vies de la maison, mais qui rêve la beauté et qui parfois rêve la mort, comme l'éclatement d'une vie trop mesquine.

Je retrouve les trois filles: Claude, Monique et Claire.

Je retrouve enfin, à la fenêtre du 2^{ème} étage, un bout de crâne penché, dont le poil argenté, mal fourni et soyeux tire de gauche à droite, le Philippin qui, venant sans doute de terminer un article incendiaire pour 'Libération', retourne à son absence, entre sa pipe et son béret basque. . . son absence, un univers proustien où décante un temps sans cesse retrouvé.

Samedi

Ce matin, en arrosant le parquet de la salle commune, avec une casserole percée, pour faire tomber la poussière avant de balayer, la Philippine m'interroge sur Londres. Elle me parle de la maisonnée et du fils à Paris qui a pour sa mère—en réciprocité d'ailleurs—une telle passion que nous l'accusons du complexe d'œdipe. Mais le souci du jour dans cette maison où le malheur éclate sans jamais pouvoir éteindre l'exubérance du cœur et de l'esprit, le souci est Claude.

Claude a dix-huit ans. Elle était danseuse acrobatique. L'été, elle faisait le grand écart et la roue. Elle traversait la guerre comme un cerceau de papier, avec son corps éclatant de vie. Je la retrouve couchée, avec une péritonite tuberculeuse: on l'opère dans huit jours. Cet après-midi, tandis que je lui tenais compagnie, lisant un rapport de Maurice sur le 'noyautage des administrations publiques', elle a eu une crise. Elle avait le regard sec et épouvanté, et tandis que je tenais dans mes bras son corps plié en deux, elle a vomi son déjeuner. Philippine qui revenait à peine d'une marche de 6 km. à la chasse des pommes de terre et du vin, est accourue. C'est une des plus fortes joueuses que j'ai connues

dans l'adversité: deux heures plus tard le médecin était passé, la menace effacée et Claude dormait.

Le dîner—pommes et choux—a un goût de brûlé. Au moins y a-t-il du vin et du tabac. Père des Peuples arrive seul, sans Maurice qui devait l'accompagner. Il boit son comptant, s'éclaircit la voix et, avec cet air mi figue mi raisin du conteur qui ne rate jamais ses effets, il entame le récit d'une nouvelle catastrophe.

—Jean, Jacqueline et Maurice ont été pris à 9 heures du matin. Ils sont au petit dépôt. Ravachol va faire une tentative . . . Il est joli notre secrétariat; trois boîtes aux lettres et le bureau de Gambetta sont brûlés. Ils ont ramassé un peu de courrier, mais ce n'est pas grave: les régions qui avaient le contact seront avisées à temps . . . Le plus ennuyeux est qu'il faut changer tout de suite une douzaine d'identités, dont la vôtre et la mienne. Jacqueline avait douze cartes d'alimentation sur elle pour le renouvellement. . . .

'Comme vous partez demain, j'ai envoyé ce matin Gaston chez le sous-préfet avec trois photos, la vôtre, la mienne et celle d'Arnaud pour avoir de vraies cartes. Pour la vôtre cela ne va pas, il l'a reconnue immédiatement, ses services venaient de la recevoir et on l'a distribuée aux préfectures, aux commissariats et aux gares: on vous cherche sérieusement . . . Cet après-midi j'ai trouvé Pierre des faux papiers qui vous fera quelque chose cette nuit, et Lucie vous les remettra à Mâcon . . . Jusque-là, il faudra risquer le coup sans papier. Faites attention cette nuit.'

Philippin est monté se coucher, la Philippine a écouté tout en roulant une dernière cigarette avec ses mégots.

Père des Peuples continue d'expliquer:

—'Comme il n'y a pas assez de monde pour les filatures, et qu'elles sont trop visibles, ils ont adopté un nouveau système celui des points sensibles: les ponts, les arrêts de trams, les terminus, comme celui du train bleu. Ils y mettent des observateurs. Ils prétendent qu'en trois jours un type qui travaille sur Lyon repasse fatalement par les points sensibles.'

Philippine a rechargé le poêle. Elle est sortie pour placer une échelle contre le mur mitoyen du jardin. Maintenant je l'entends vaquer dans la cuisine. Elle prépare le café du matin qu'elle réchauffera à 7 heures pour Monique et pour moi. Elle se raconte une histoire, mêlée à la vie, et qui la tient aux aguêts. Comme chaque nuit elle en rêvera avant de se lever au petit matin.

Dimanche

J'ai rêvé à Kay. J'ai rêvé d'une glace à trois faces. A 8 heures je me suis mis en route pour Paris. Comme les gares de Lyon me sont néfastes, je vais prendre la train à Saint-Germain au Mont Dore: 15 km. de marche le long de la Saône, mais pas de flics.

A Mâcon je retrouverai Lucie qui m'apportera les papiers. Nous remonterons ensemble vers Paris. Elle a un système qu'elle déclare infaillible pour passer la ligne.

Les Français sont devenus les gens les plus patients de la terre. Voilà deux heures que je suis dans la salle d'attente de Mâcon. Il y a deux espèces: les victimes de la fatalité qui dorment ou ruminent, les autres—sans doute les coupables—qui prennent un air faussement dégagé. Tout ça devant des consommations invraisemblables qui vont de la limonade saccharinée au pernod sans absinthe ni alcool. Je n'aime pas le grand brun qui est assis dans le coin et qui m'apprend par cœur aussitôt que je baisse la tête.

Mais Lucie entre et met tout le monde dans sa poche. Elle utilise avec une aptitude et une agilité déroutantes le mensonge, la candeur, la violence, la ruse ou le charme. Elle sait se mettre un coussin sur le ventre pour jouer la femme enceinte, mais quand elle est vraiment enceinte, elle garde le même train de vie. Elle a domestiqué la chance mais elle me fait peur parce qu'il n'est pas sûr qu'elle ait domestiqué la chance des autres.

La nuit est tombée, Lucie a mené ses pourparlers tambour battant. Au bout d'un quart d'heure il y a six personnes qui payent leurs consommations et se découvrent une commune envie de prendre l'air. J'en suis, et nous nous retrouvons sur un train de marchandises dans un wagon de chaussures en train de nous ménager avec quelques planches un abri sous la montagne de godillots. Nous sommes trois dans notre terrier: Lucie, un marlou marseillais et moi.

Je suis trop maigre: pas assez de chair entre mes os et la tôle. J'ai des crampes partout. Lucie dort sur mon épaule, le Marlou mange.

Châlons. Voilà quatre heures que nous sommes partis. L'arrêt est interminable, coupé de manœuvres, de bruits de pas sur les quais ou le toit des wagons, du bruit des portes coulissantes. La nôtre est ouverte qui laisse le chemin aux courants d'air glacés et aux bruits à la cantonade d'une patrouille allemande qui visite les wagons l'un après l'autre et qui s'approche.

Le marlou, notre voisin, rôte et tousse. Il a trop bafgré, il soupire: 'Merde, j'ai une de ces envies de pisser . . .' Lucie répond entre haut et bas: 'Il fallait y penser avant' et ajoute: 'Celui-là à l'arrivée je lui casserai la gueule'. Le marlou ricane: 'De quoi, de quoi, on verra bien . . .' Je n'aime pas beaucoup ça, il pèse deux fois mon poids.

Tous les souffles sont coupés par un dialogue en allemand derrière la tôle. Un soldat demande à son camarade: '*Hast-du diesen Wagen ausgezucht?*' Aussitôt une pair de bottes a sauté dans le wagon, un bruit de crosse et le soldat fourrage dans les chaussures avec le canon de son mousqueton.

Lucie est une statue de sel, dont les cheveux vivants me chatouillent la joue.

F. MCEACHRAN

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

A CENTENARY

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, the centenary of whose birth we celebrated last month, is one of the most quoted, least understood, most condemned and (probably) least read of modern philosophers. I noted for example only the other day in the Bodleian at Oxford that the eighteen volumes of the authorized English edition, translated under the auspices of Dr. Oscar Levy, were still uncut (since 1913), and I have little doubt that a similar situation exists in other university libraries in Britain. Yet the recent publication of two important works on Nietzsche in England and America, *Friedrich Nietzsche* by Father Copleston, S. J., and *What Nietzsche Means* by C. A. Morgan, suggests that serious interest is at last beginning to show itself in Anglo-Saxon countries. The general lack of knowledge which undoubtedly still prevails will serve, I hope, as an excuse for the elementary facts which I am venturing to present in this essay.

The central idea in Nietzsche's philosophy (although not its final end) is the conception of the Superman, which can be descried in embryo in the work which first attracted public attention to Nietzsche: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In this study of Greek drama and in an essay of about the same date on the early

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Greek philosophers Nietzsche laid down that Greek religion was based not only on the worship of Apollo the god of dream-like repose and harmony, but also on Dionysus the god of ecstasy and strife, and that Greek tragedy, in its best days (Aeschylus) attempted a fusion of the two. The nucleus of a drama such as *Prometheus Vincit* is the choric song, the original dionysiac ritual, round which the non-choric plot had grown up under the influence of the worship of Apollo.

Every tragic hero was in fact really an incarnation of Dionysus. Later this figure of Dionysus reappears in more poetical form in the hero of Nietzsche's masterpiece *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and was developed further into the Superman of the later works (*The Will to Power*, etc). An important fact about Dionysus, as interpreted by Nietzsche, is that the Greeks when inspired by him were enabled to contemplate unmoved the pathos of human existence. Like the god himself they could see beyond the human tragedy into a world that was 'beautiful' rather than 'good'. This faculty, which belongs also to the Superman, brings us to the doctrine of eternal recurrence (*Ewige Wiederkunft*).

Nietzsche preferred the early Greek world to the later and in particular the philosophers and artists of the sixth century to those of the fifth and fourth. His favourite philosopher was Heraclitus with his activist doctrine: 'All things flow' and the periodic destruction and rebirth of the world in successive world cycles. How far Nietzsche was influenced by Heraclitus (and other Greek thinkers such as Pythagoras and the Stoa), how far he really developed the doctrine from a sort of mystic intuition of his own (as he asserts) is not easy to say, but next to that of the Superman it is central to his *Weltanschauung*. The physics on which he bases it is not impressive and need not delay us: much more significant is the ethical teaching which he draws from it. The world as we know it has already recurred an infinite number of times, and it will occur again an infinite number of times in the future. It is your duty then (although 'duty' is not a term Nietzsche would use) *to live so that you will want your life to be repeated an infinite number of times*. Moreover, and this is the crux of the matter, the infinite recurrence provides the ultimate test of your 'super-humanity'. For since all things return, not only the good and glorious and wonderful, the marvellous and strong, the beautiful and noble, but also the sordid and the painful, the monstrous and the

terrible—all these return too. Can you contemplate this prospect and be thrilled at it?¹ If so then you are a Superman, who says 'Yes' to life.

Nietzsche's theory of morals is individualist rather than collectivist. He is *par excellence* the noble anarchist. The State to him is anathema, 'the coldest of all cold monsters'. But his anarchism is based not on freedom or equality, but on individual power of will—the will-power of the strong individual, who is noble because he is strong. It is here in his criticism of all previous systems of morality that he shows a certain originality and a very radical point of view. Morality as a code arose originally in the primitive society born of conquest, in which the 'blond beast' vanquished weaker peoples. 'Good and bad' are an antithesis peculiar to the noble caste of rulers; 'evil' and 'good' (in reverse order) to the tame 'herd' which is ruled. 'Noble', 'beautiful', 'strong', are allied terms in the vocabulary of the rulers and sum up the qualities of 'good' men as they conceive of goodness. 'Bad' in the same vocabulary signifies 'contemptible', 'ugly', 'weak', and applies to members of the 'herd' which is ruled over. On the contrary in the moral language of the herd the primary concept is 'evil', since the herd is timid, oppressed and anxious to live at any price. 'Evil', therefore, is the herd name for the 'beautiful', 'proud', 'strong' people of the ruling class, and 'good' by antithesis describes the herd qualities of mildness, weakness, excessive sociability, etc. This was roughly the *natural* morality of primitive people, and may be seen exemplified above all in Nietzsche's favourite Greeks of the sixth century B.C. before Socrates and Plato invented an absolute ethics. It was also, according to Nietzsche, the morality of the Jews of the days of David and Solomon whom he admired. From this consideration we can explain easily enough how he came to his peculiar theory of history, which is based on the *devaluation* of the values outlined above.

History went wrong, according to Nietzsche, at two nodal points, the era of Socrates and Plato and the Babylonian exile of the Jews. Socrates and still more Plato made the frightful mistake of trying to base ethics on reason instead of the strong will and, in the case of the latter, placed το καλόν in a transcendent world. This was the first great evasion, by virtue of which Plato reveals himself as a Christian before his time. This surrender of the old aristocratic instincts in favour of democratic 'logic' and devitalized

¹ *Amor Fati* is the name Nietzsche gave to this.

'dialectic' was itself bad enough, but worse was to follow. In the fifth century B.C. the Hebrew tribes in exile made a similar surrender for the sake of 'living at any price', and they too proceeded to 'devalue' the old values. Under the ægis of their priestly caste they denounced the virtues of their conquerors, and exalted the servile qualities which alone by insidious methods promised a future, the virtues of the plebeian, of the weak and the ugly. Then came the Christians¹ and above all the apostle Paul who spread the anti-natural doctrine like a virus round the civilized world, like a vampire sucking the living blood of its victim. The Christian Church destroyed the vitals of the aristocratic empire and in the place of the noble Cæsar put the ascetic priest. Some of the really exciting pages of Nietzsche are those in which he vituperates his pet aversion St. Paul, and denounces the ascetic life of the Middle Ages. Only during the period of the Renaissance was there a brief renewal of the antique view of life—a fleeting glimpse of the beauty that might be—and even this was stamped out all too quickly by the German Reformation of which the arch-villain was the Pauline Luther. The depths of corruption, however, were not to be plumbed till the nineteenth century, and the rise of the second German Empire of the Hohenzollerns. Here was the poisoned fountain of disguised Christian 'herd' values, masquerading as socialism, Marxism, anarchism, Benthamite utilitarianism, even Hegelianism, all of which are nothing more or less than the old Christian values in a new form—the *utopianism* of 'the botched and the bungled' seeking a Christian heaven on earth. Only by a radical *transvaluation* of all values, and rejection root and branch of the traditional herd-values and a return to the natural values of the master-class will the world and the human race be saved.

This very brief account of the substance of Nietzsche's philosophy may give a somewhat perverted idea by its very oversimplification. A characteristic of Nietzsche's mind is its penetrating subtlety and one of the attractions of his writings is the way he will pursue a line of thought through infinite ramifications. Although he criticized Christianity severely he also gave it credit for a number of qualities, one of which is the emphasis it lays on truth and the need to attain it. Precisely the invention

¹Not Jesus, whom Nietzsche admired. 'There was only *one* Christian, and he died on the Cross.'

of 'conscience' and 'guilt' which he so bitterly condemns, by his own admission turned the thoughts of men inward and so taught them (albeit in the wrong interests) to examine their inmost thoughts. This is only one among many of Nietzsche's qualifications even of his worst attacks.

Nietzsche went mad in 1889 when his doctrine, first popularized by the Danish critic Brandes, was just beginning to spread throughout Europe. Hardly recognized in his own lifetime—indeed the lack of any sympathy on the part of his contemporaries was a contributory cause of his breakdown—his rise to fame was almost spectacular from 1900 onwards. Resistance to his doctrine was, of course, very considerable, and most of all in England and America, and the English-speaking countries generally. The apparent atheism of his doctrine does not go down with the Anglo-Saxon public, amongst which it is simply 'not done' to attack Christianity, and we must confess that at times Nietzsche's onslaughts sound more akin to the ravings of a maniac than the carefully reasoned argument of a philosopher. On the other hand, in France, where minds are perhaps broader on the religious issue or perhaps where attacks on the Roman Church are more welcome, some very good work on Nietzsche has been done. The monumental volumes of Charles Andler for example are probably the best that have been written so far on the philosopher, and even the Italians in the work of M. Castiglione have contributed their share. But apart from research which is only just beginning, the really significant phenomenon of our age has been the systematic distortion and debasement of his philosophy in the interests of German Fascism. 'The philosopher,' quoted by the mouth of Goebbels, will not easily be commended to an inquiring universe.

It should be stressed at the outset that two of the main platforms of Fascism in Germany, (1) the totalitarian State, and (2) the racial doctrine with its anti-semitic bias and doctrine of the *Herrenvolk*, are flatly denounced by Nietzsche in everything he wrote at all pertaining to the subject. He denounced the State completely, and in particular the State doctrine of Hegel who in any case was a *bête noire* because of his doctrine of the Absolute, a sort of red rag to the Nietzschean bull. Secondly with regard to the racial doctrine he denounced it simply as 'race' swindle and refused to have anything to do with its protagonists, including the anti-semites. He was in fact very angry with his sister for marrying

the anti-semitic Förster. True he despised Hebrew values, but as he identified them with the Christian there is no anti-semitic capital to be raised on that score. As for the idea that the Germans might be the *Herrenvolk* he would have burst with indignation at the thought, his opinion of the Germans being worse than his opinion of any European nation (not excluding the English). He even went so far as to blame them for every major European evil in the last four centuries, of which the two greatest were the Reformation and the War of Liberation against Napoleon. On paper at least he disowned them and refused even to live in their country. Only on a third count, his theory of morals, especially his doctrine of *hardness*, can his thought be to any extent confused with that of the Nazis, and here a good deal of qualification needs to be made.

Nietzsche's general outlook is the most human (in the literal sense) ever conceived. The universe to him is chaos and the mind of man (including the subconscious mind) brings *order* into it (like the *voûs* of Anaxagoras, another of his favourite philosophers). The driving impulse behind all human activity is the 'will to power' and it is this will to power which explains the rise of logic, science, etc., in the human sphere. Man prefers the stable, the permanent, because it enables him to consolidate his power more easily, so he invents concepts such as 'substance' and laws like the 'law of identity', etc., to make this easier. The highest man, the superman to come, does this on the highest level and consolidates his power in the world to the fullest extent. Whatever is life-promoting (and life includes cultural and spiritual qualities) is 'good' and there is no other criterion of 'good' except what men 'will'.

The *Superman* as Nietzsche conceived him will be strong, mentally, physically and spiritually, and he and his like will rule the earth as philosophic kings not unlike those of Plato. Below him will be the executive or the soldier type, who keep order, and below the soldier the merchant and professional class who do the everyday work of life. As Nietzsche sees it, living becomes easier as you go down the scale, harder as you go up, and he definitely meant by *hardness* a hardness towards oneself, with even a touch of the ascetic. Even his praise of war, for example, which has often been quoted against him, applies mainly to the spiritual war of the members and means really that a man who wishes to lead must

integrate himself. The man at the top must be hard, cold, philosophic, sensitive to beauty, far-seeing, but hard and cold, not through lack of feeling but because he has overcome feeling, unsympathetic, not because he has no sympathy, but because he feels it deeply and has risen above it. Above all he must be overflowing with spontaneous vitality, a generosity flowing naturally from his own inexhaustible strength.

The men of this type who are to be the future 'lords of the earth' will arise through the interbreeding of the best European stocks, not excluding the Jews, who in the end, he thought, would be assimilated. Thus Nietzsche was international in outlook. He wanted 'good Europeans' and a 'united' Europe. He saw only ruin and endless slaughter in the rising national feeling of his own day and prophesied a series of chaotic nationalistic wars in the twentieth century. The effect of these wars would be so terrible that an age of 'nihilism' would ensue in which men would cease to believe in anything. The prevailing religious outlook would be a sort of Buddhism, which he regards as the religion most natural to exhausted peoples. After this period in some undefined way the 'race' of supermen would arise, and, with Europe as their centre, would rule the earth. After this 'Great Noon' the universe would again repeat itself and so on for ever and ever.

Nietzsche's services to mankind may be summed up very briefly. First the emphasis on the deeper instincts as against the mind, the first stirring of the psychotherapy of the subconscious which has been so developed in recent years.¹ Secondly the view of the universe as *beautiful*, which, however much it may offend the narrow-minded, has long been needed and may be essential to human well-being. Thirdly the tragic view of human life and the acceptance—cheerful and secure in the highest degree—of its dualist and antagonistic nature. *Amor Fati* is the name Nietzsche gave to this view, and it is not dissimilar, although he would hardly admit it, to the view of more intellectual Christians with regard to the crucifixion of the Lord. Fourthly his criticism of the totalitarian State and of the 'general will' of Rousseau and Hegel which lies behind it, is the best possible tonic in the world we are now living in today. And lastly his description of men as they might be in the Supermen—with certain important qualifications—is the most inspiring reading to be found in any modern writer.

¹ A. Adler, *Individual Psychology*.

In conclusion there are two points in his *Weltanschauung* which link him up far more closely than he would be willing to admit with traditional religion. Few will deny that in all religions two essential features are always present, without which no religion can really endure: one the promise of *eternal life* and the other the promise of *moral cleansing* or purification (known in Christianity as the 'forgiveness of sins'). Both of these Nietzsche denounced with no small vigour and both of them in a new form he introduced into his system. There is no doubt whatever that the doctrine of 'eternal recurrence' is simply his way of 'overcoming death' and that of the Superman his version of the 'redeemed' sinner. The long illness of conscience and guilt healed by the Cross for Christians is brought to an end for the Nietzschean by the identification with the Superman—beyond good and evil—and both have as their background a similar religious and tragic view of life. Nietzsche thus represents more than most the crisis of modern man, which perhaps first became apparent in Goethe's *Faust* of more than a century ago. Faust had lost faith and he too sought healing through the power of beauty (in the Helena of Part II). In *Thus Spake Zarathustra* the struggle is more intense and the soul more shaken. For this fact alone, that he brings us back to the fundamental religious problem, Nietzsche should be read today. And to those who are too easily misled by his doctrine of hardness there is the reminder that he too loved the world (i.e. the test of the Superman), and in one famous aphorism told us a truth worthy of Christ:

• 'Thoughts, which come on doves' feet, rule the world.'

E. MARY MILFORD

A MODERN PRIMITIVE

THAT is the house, with its two green street doors, its barred windows, its narrow white-washed roofs, squeezed among crowded neighbours in winding Ananda Chatterji Lane in North Calcutta. There at any time, on any day I could find Jamini Roy working. He seldom went out, he seldom went away. His days passed smoothly between one exhibition and the next in unhurried work, letting his brush move in those faultless curves that

firmly built up the grey figures of his sleeping women, his leaping deer, his bright Madonnas and his temple-dancers. I rattle the ring on his front door. I step inside the open door and call his name. He answers with a glad greeting, rising from his low wooden seat with its white bolster, where he has been painting, surrounded by the little earthen pots of brilliant colours. Tucking in his loosened *dhoti* and gracefully swinging his shawl over his shoulders, the old man hastens to welcome his guest, offering me a seat on one of his simple wooden stools covered with pieces of white muslin, which are placed round the walls of the little rooms.

These three small rooms and a courtyard are brilliant with the pictures of this artist. Each room represents a distinct group of work. The forsaken period of his successful portraiture in oils is not represented. Long ago, painting in European style he felt he was being false to himself. He turned his back on that part of easy success and took to painting in gouache and tempera in a distinct and Indian style. He turned to specimens of the Bengali religious painting practised on the roadside in the neighbourhood of the Kalighat temples and sold to the pilgrims for a small price. Here was perfect technique of brush-stroke, beginning with a broad firm pressure of the brush and ending the curve with a light fine gradation. These simple figures were composed almost entirely of curves, the only straight line perhaps the line of the nose, or a sharp angle in the drapery of the sari. Jamini carries out these themes in ash-grey line on a background graded from grey to white giving the effect of figures emerging from a shadowy room or animals leaping across a wide plain. Charming as these pictures are as quiet decoration, Jamini expresses himself more truly in hot colour and more complicated pattern.

Leaving then this first room of line pictures we wander into the second, vibrating with colour and a restless pointelism. Withdrawn in his Calcutta home, entirely Bengali in his environment, with very little of the English language at his command, this vigorous mind turns away from the Ajanta tradition which is suffocating his contemporaries and turns to the French Impressionists and the modern Art of Europe. He turns over the pages of Van Gogh, Picasso, Monet, and taking the basic composition of one of these scenes which these masters painted from life, after a prolonged study of nature, this artist who uses the resources of his mind rather than his eyes, fills his full brush

with bright primary colours and plays upon the borrowed theme, or on some brief note of his own. He makes happy pictures of coloured boats under indefinite trees, orchard trunks receding into perspective, vague fields and houses belonging to no specified country, certainly not to India. These sketches sell easily and give their shallow satisfaction. In them Jamini has his colour-play.

Tolerant but not impressed I turn away from this second room of landscape, and enter the courtyard. Here standing in corners are large earthen jars painted in geometric patterns of bright designs. Jamini believes in the decoration of common things of everyday use. Art is to serve daily life and not to be the privilege of a high-brow clique or the luxury of the rich. The prices of his pictures and his pots makes them accessible to most. He sells easily and is kept working. Their unpretentious materials enables them to fit in with deal furniture and cheap cotton curtains, or simple modern decoration. On the white-washed walls of the courtyard are terra-cotta and white paintings of animals; tigers painted as children paint them with stomachs drawn in the middle of the bodies, with circular ringed eyes, definite and decorative; bold and militant horses, firm as wood, in gay harness; bland cows turning their sleepy heads; agile monkeys and cats. Each of these is a possible design for material, naïve and honest as the children's drawings which inspired them. In his collection Jamini has hundreds of childrens' drawings and finds in them an original imagination and a clear instinct for decoration.

Wandering along the narrow passage towards the last room where the finest and most representative of Jamini Roy's work is hung, I see large decorations which should long ago have been placed in public buildings. A magnificent frieze of dancing girls in firm pattern admirable for cinema or restaurant decoration. Long sculptural panels of peasant subjects, a working-man squatting with his tool poised, drummers, dancers, women with pitchers or trays of offerings.

In the last room there are intricate paintings that tell the stories of Hindu Mythology. Perhaps in these Jamini proves the strength of his power of composition. The scene is crowded on the background of symbolic temples or houses or forests. Animated crowds of characters each important to the story are handled with the same calm sense of design as in the simple trios of women, where one stands in the front and an attendant looks over either shoulder.

If we turn to ancient Indian sculpture we recognize certain postures as characteristic; such as the out-turned hand at right angles to the arm, the wide hips slightly tilted, the circular breasts, the general rhythm of the body. In a simplified form Jamini continues this tradition. M. Burnier's fine photographs of Indian sculpture now published give an opportunity as never before to see the wealth and beauty of this art of the temple. Jamini is in line with it, not because he has attempted any conscious revival, or has made any special study of it, but only because he has naturally grown up in the tradition and has not allowed it to be stifled by art school training or by the fresh revolutionary experiments of his own. To be aware of Indian culture and also sympathetic to the work of Picasso is an interesting combination. Often the mythological picture is knit together and decorated with Alpona, a geometric use of spots and lines, familiar on floors and walls at festival times and carried out by women in sandal paste. This strong sense of pattern in Jamini can be tested by enjoying some of his pictures in sections. Six inches of certain pictures are satisfying as abstract pattern. This and his use of black line to stress pattern gives many of his paintings the character of stained-glass windows. One feels that as a worker of stained glass Jamini could have been very great. In his recent Byzantine Christian themes this is particularly evident. The colours are plain and vivid, almost harsh and give the effect of bright sunlight through glass. His interpretation of Christ is strong, relentless and pure. A superior, enigmatic Being, absolute and unassailable. As an unbeliever giving his objective comment on a profound character there is a link between Jamini and Epstein. There are paintings of the Last Supper which are pure decoration, six figures each side of a Leader, making a perfect balance. Sometimes it is the head only, a leaf-shaped face on a long stem of neck and strange all-seeing eyes. The most serious work is the full-length figure of Christ in earth, red, black and white, standing upright in loin-cloth with the white lines of a cross patterned across the body. Small feet planted on the earth and the form towering larger and larger to the crown at the rim of the picture.

We sit down on the low wooden seat to discuss his latest work. Outside the window we hear the beggars crying for pice.

'Indian Art is dead,' he says bitterly. 'It is weak, it is lazy, it is imitative. In the West is vitality and struggle for life. Where

can you find originality or even living line among our artists?' Naturally this is not a popular attitude in a nationalistic age. Frankly I have to admit that I have not found as much originality or sustained work in any other Indian artist as in Jamini. And he has no school of imitators. He stands alone. I confide in him that I am harassed by conflicting duties without sufficient peace for painting. He brushes this aside. 'Peace is not good for an artist, art is born of experience, of stress and strain, wrestling with problems, intellectual and physical.'

In criticizing the pictures of others his eye is swift and experienced, his judgement mature. He appreciates work of a very different school to his own. He is relentless against confused composition or weakness of line or dirty colour. His sense of colour is never at fault and is best when he pitches it low. We are looking at his paintings of the life of Christ. 'This is my latest period. I shall continue to work at this theme. I am not a Christian. I do not read the New Testament or any other writing but I meditate on what I have heard and what I know. Religious art should be abstract and symbolical. There have been few if any satisfactory paintings of Christ for expression of the significance of his life. This is a great theme and I will continue to struggle to find a fitting expression in modern terms.'

Again this proved to me the independence of this man's mind. When all his local contemporaries predicted the downfall of the West, and harnessed an effete Christianity to the foreign imperialism, Jamini realizes the world crisis, longs for the new age, and prophetically knows the permanence of Christ. Jamini thinks for himself, follows his own line without aggression but in sincerity, simplicity and freedom.

EDOUARD RODITI

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS

I—ITALO SVEVO

ITALO SVEVO's real name was Ettore Schmitz. He was born in Trieste on 19 December 1861. His mother was Italian, his father was German-Austrian, and there was also a Jewish strain in the family. From 1873 to 1878, Svevo studied in Germany, where he

attended a business-school; when he returned to his native seaport, he devoted another couple of years to commercial studies at the Rivoltella School, then was employed, until 1897, in a bank where he observed the background of his first novel, *Una Vita*, published in 1893 and written while he was still a bank-clerk. In 1897 Svevo became partner in a business and, in 1898, published his second novel, *Senilità*: during the remaining years of his life, he seems to have devoted most of his time and energies to various successful commercial activities, often travelling to Venice or Vienna and sometimes farther, to France, England, Germany and Ireland. In 1923 he published his longest and most famous novel, *La coscienza di Zeno*; he also published a few stories, some short, others almost long enough to be novels, which all belong to the later period of his writing and appeared mostly in periodicals after the great success of *Zeno: La madre* (1910), *Una burla riuscita* (1926), *Vino generoso* (1926), *La novella del buon vecchio e della bella fanciulla* (1926). *Dalle memorie di un cane*, a short piece, is not included in the posthumous volume of Svevo's collected stories which, however, contains the beginning of *Il vecchione*, another long novel that he had just begun writing when he was killed, in a motor accident near Trieste, in September 1928.

Critics and journalists of many nations have already discussed Svevo in hundreds of articles; interpretatively and disconnectedly, they have tended to appreciate details of his fiction without elucidating their structural significance in the whole work, or have enthusiastically protested that Svevo is far greater than other writers to whom other critics have compared him. Federico Sternberg, in *L'Opera di Italo Svevo*, a pamphlet published in Trieste in 1928, thus insists that his dead friend was a greater writer than Proust; Benjamin Crémieux, a French critic, had dared to recommend *Zeno* to French readers by suggesting that they would discover, in the Italian novel, qualities that they already admired in *A la recherche du temps perdu*. But few of these articles and essays are now worth reading; a careful study of Svevo's fiction teaches us more about his qualities, faults or peculiarities, and about his life and beliefs. In January 1929, *Il convegno*, a Milan periodical, devoted a special issue to Svevo, with a useful bibliography and one excellent essay, *Svevo e Schmitz* (*Svevo, Schmitz e Zeno* would have been a better title), by Giacomo De Benedetti, who investigates the novelist's plural

personality, as businessman, citizen of Trieste, novelist and hero of his own stories.

Svevo's works are indeed difficult to place accurately in the complex and conflicting traditions of the Italian novel. The society that he describes is not typically Italian; his characters illustrate many qualities and faults of the Austrian bourgeoisie; his language, far from being the literary Tuscan of classical idealists or the colourful dialect of the realists or *Veristi*, is rather the sophisticated and nerveless jargon of the educated Triestine bourgeoisie that spoke Italian neither as a literary nor as a national language, but as a convenient and easy affectation of local patriotism. Svevo was an Austrian citizen until the end of the first World War, when two of his novels had already been published; all his fiction is clearly set in pre-war Trieste, except the very last part of *Zeno* (the war in and around Trieste), *La novella del buon vecchio* (war-time Trieste), *Una burla riuscita* (post-war inflation in Trieste) and *Il vecchione* (Italian Trieste after the war). Svevo's characters are mostly of the Italian-speaking bourgeoisie, though their names are often Croat or German and many of them speak German; characters picked from the people are described as speaking Triestine or Friulian dialect, mixtures of Italian and Croatian, and the 'buon vecchio' does not wish to teach the 'bella fanciulla' correct Italian, when he decides to educate her, but German.

Many Italian critics have mistakenly placed Svevo's work in the tradition of late Italian *Verismo*, as another example of that late nineteenth-century regional realism, which with Verga, put Sicily back on the literary map and, in D'Annunzio's early stories, revealed the primitive Abruzzi; Svevo would thus be the *verista* chronicler of Triestine characters and streets, manners and modes. Most foreign critics, especially Crémieux and the French, have, however, vaguely placed Svevo in the general trend of international 'advanced' literature of the post-war, with Marcel Proust and James Joyce, because of his strange use of psychology; a few have more wisely derived Svevo's psychology from Flaubert's realist novels, *Madame Bovary*, *L'éducation sentimentale*, *Un cœur simple*, and *Bouvard et Pécuchet*. It might, however, prove more profitable and conclusive to place Svevo in a context of Austrian literature and compare him to those Austrian novelists whose culture was not strictly German and who often wrote in one or the other of the many languages spoken within the polygot empire. Svevo

shares many characteristics with such writers as Schnitzler, Robert Musil and Franz Kafka, who wrote in German, and with some Czech and Hungarian novelists. It seems as if the empire, though not always strong enough to impose one language on all its subjects, yet diffused a common Austrian culture among the various peoples within its boundaries.

Attilio Momigliano's *Storia della letteratura italiana* discusses several of the later *veristi* and concludes that Grazia Deledda, Tozzi and Svevo are 'anti-literary', but that Svevo is often just 'prosy'. This prosy tone was also observed by De Benedetti: 'His Italian is fortuitous and casual, a language like Italian because it is composed of Italian words, but not according to Italian patterns, Italian by analogy, and organized nomenclature, not an organic language'. De Benedetti objects, as French stylists have in their criticisms of Balzac, to the many technical terms that Svevo borrowed from trades and commerce and used, without any 'polishing', for lyrical or descriptive purposes: 'Portava una barba piena lunghetta, *condizionata in quanto a colore come la capigliatura*'. Svevo says this, in *Una Vita*, of old Lanucci, who was in the habit of dyeing his beard; *condizionata* is the term used by tradesmen, cleaners and dyers, and *in quanto a colore* is one of those pompous pseudo-literary syntagms, 'as far as colour was concerned', that appear in business-letters and in the speech of semi-educated tradesmen such as Bouvard and Pécuchet or Homais. But this is the jargon of a settled or declining bourgeoisie that has established a language of its own, modelled on the elegant forms of the classically minded aristocracy that preceded it and often unconsciously creating a parody of the earlier style; and it seems to have been peculiarly typical of the last liberal decades of the Austrian empire. One finds it throughout the articles and stories of the *Wiener Journal*, in Schnitzler's 'frenchified' prose and especially in the monologue of *Leutnant Gustl*; and it is one of the chief qualities of Franz Kafka, to whose fantasies and allegories this matter-of-fact style adds a real weight, rooting the impossible in the probability of daily experience. Who, reading casually one of K.'s conversations, would at first think that *The Castle* is an elaborate allegory of power, divine and human, of God and monarchy which rule the anonymous citizen's destiny and never give him a chance to understand what he is about and whither he is being led?

Svevo's heroes all seem to be tormented with an intense lust for self-improvement, spiritual or social, for education, wisdom or learning that will better them or their positions; however old, they still think themselves unprepared for the serious business of living. Zeno thus always hopes to cure himself of his vice of smoking, long hesitates between law and chemistry as professions, then does nothing till circumstances force him into business where, much to his own surprise, he is successful. The heroes of *Una Vita*, *Senilità* and *The Hoax* are not content with their petty clerical jobs, consider these far beneath their intelligence and culture, and hope or intend, some day, to devote all their time and talents to writing. The heroes of *Senilità* and *The Hoax*, though they may each have published a novel some years earlier, and both still enjoy, in provincial society, considerable reputations as local intellectuals, are yet both unable now to write anything new. The hero of *The Hoax* for his own amusement or to compensate his inferiority complex, does indeed compose some animal fables that are included in the narrative, but Zeno also effortlessly composes two such fables and Svevo himself, in his years of literary sterility, wrote *La Madre*, another such animal fable to which he attached very little importance. The heroes of *Una vita* and *La novella del buon vecchio* both try to compose philosophic treatises, become hopelessly involved and make no real progress in clarifying their thoughts, or consigning them to paper in an ordered form. In a bourgeois society of culture-snobs, illusions of intellectual grandeur thus compensate for social or emotional maladjustment; but these illusions no longer need produce any material results, though they may have in the past, and Zeno himself manages to write his autobiography only because this is part of the discipline of his psycho-analysis, whereas Svevo's other heroes dream of writing something only in the vague future or are unable to express themselves.

Such 'hopeless' characters appear in many Austrian novels; the Viennese *Erziehungsroman* had slipped from the lofty level of *Wilhelm Meister* to that, so much more ineffectual, of the higher or lower urban bourgeoisie. In Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Ulrich thus leaves the army to become a mathematician, never studies very seriously and is easily distracted from mathematics when he discovers that he is gifted for music; he then becomes involved in politics, later in psychiatry, and finally

is interested almost exclusively in a moronic Jack-the-Ripper, whose name fills all the headlines and whom he even visits in prison. And Schnitzler's *Leutnant Gustl*, in his doubts and hesitations about the duel, is even more closely related to a Svevo character, to the hero of *Una Vita* who finally evades a duel by committing suicide.

Momigliano notes, too, that Svevo has also been compared to Otto Weininger, Proust, Joyce and Freud. Neglecting the others, he concludes that Svevo's arid psychology alone should distinguish him from Proust, so much more lyrical; Svevo is more interested in intelligence than in fantasy, his psychology astonishes and convinces in its details but seems uncertain and diffuse in the 'whole', his characters offer too many possibilities and follow patterns that are too synthetic. True, Svevo is more interested in the causality of action than, as Proust, in emotion and memory; but Proust never read Svevo and Svevo can have read Proust only after he himself had written at least two of his three great novels, probably three. Joyce indeed knew whole passages of Svevo's *Senilità* by heart; in 1906, Svevo and Joyce had met in Trieste and Joyce had given English lessons to Svevo. They remained great friends and, after 1923, Joyce recommended *Zeno* to his Parisian friends and admirers, so that Crémieux and Valéry Larbaud translated it and successfully launched it, in 1927, as they had already launched Joyce. But there ends the analogy, one of coincidences, not of reciprocal influences, though both Svevo and Joyce had been strongly influenced by Flaubert before they met in Trieste.

De Benedetti also compares Svevo's characters to Weininger's portrait of the ideal Jew (in *Geschlecht und Character*): 'Hereditarily deprived of every happy instinct of life, lacking all ability ever to relax, gifted with an unstable multiplicity of moral background which allows every shock to shape, influence or deform him.' Weininger, an anti-semitic Austrian Jew, a Wagnerian woman-hater who committed suicide, described all Jews and perhaps himself in these terms; and De Benedetti concludes that Svevo too, 'when he felt the torturing leaven of his own life fermenting beneath the surface of his characters so that the obscure depths of autobiography rise through the mask of fiction, thus obeyed, as a Jew, the suggestions and imperatives of his race.'

Svevo had indeed read Weininger. Zeno's brother-in-law, Guido Speier, 'had adopted the genial theories' of the woman-hater and Macario, in *Una Vita*, seems to have shared them too.

E

But nothing is easier or more misleading than to explain an author's peculiarities by pointing out that he is a Jew. The multiplicity of Svevo's characters, their disquieting instability, anxiety, torturing self-analysis and hesitation, their endless preoccupation with reason and causality, like that of ancient cabbalists trying to explain the cosmogony in terms of rational philosophy, all these are characteristic of Weininger's logical Jew, an 'evil' rationalist in a 'good' irrational world; and they have all been attributed generally, by other anti-semitic critics, to other Jewish or partly Jewish artists, to Heine, Proust, Marcel Schwob, Kafka or Moravia. Musil, in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, also draws interesting portraits of two different types of Jew: Leo Fischl, a small Viennese businessman, is a Jewish Homais who believes in progress and democracy, in science and realism, while Arnheim, a great Prussian Jew, is a caricature of Walther Rathenau, idealist of genius, great thinker and great statesman, gifted with a multiplicity of talents that assure him success in many fields. But Arnheim's restlessness somehow undermines everything and arouses the suspicions and antipathy of Ulrich; and beneath his apparent ease, Arnheim is perhaps as nervous and unsure of himself as Fischl, whose faith in progress and democracy are always being so grotesquely disappointed. However, if we attribute all these symptoms of a disease common among Jews, Jewish authors and Jewish characters, to the fact that nearly all of the patients are Jews, we are making the same mistake as a physician who, observing that a disease attacks only human beings, confuses this symptom with its cause and declares that the patients are ill because they are all human. The Jew whom Weininger describes consciously and Svevo perhaps unconsciously is indeed a victim of a psychological disease: living in a society that considers him different and often treats him differently, like the Armenian in Turkey or the negro in America, he either tends to imagine himself more different than he really is, so that he lives up to the character attributed to him, or tries to 'cross the line', to ignore the difference in treatment and pretend that he is not a Jew. Both pseudo-assimilation and Zionism, and the ambivalence of the individual hesitating between these extremes, are thus determined by the society's evaluation of the Jew rather than by his being Jewish. And if Svevo reveals Jewish traits in his style or his characters, he is illustrating the environmental

influence of Austrian society which achieved the same results in other Jewish writers, Kafka or Schnitzler, or in the Jewish characters of 'aryan' writers such as Robert Musil, rather than the influence of any Jewish heredity.

The influence of Freud, in Svevo's later work, is certainly important. Zeno consults a psychoanalyst, discovers that he has an Oedipus complex, and the whole novel illustrates Freudian theory as clearly as a case-history, though *A sentimental Journey*, *Adolphe* and *La Nouvelle Heloise*, written long before Freud's theories were formulated, also make excellent case-histories today. But Eugenio Montale, a few days after Svevo's death, wrote that *La coscienza di Zeno* is 'tortured with the trick of *bovarysme*', thus using a term invented by Jules de Gaultier to designate a peculiarity of Flaubert's characters, in his realistic novels, who all have what Paul Bourget called 'le mal d'avoir connu l'image de la réalité avant la réalité' and what Gaultier describes as 'le pouvoir départi à l'homme de se concevoir autre qu'il n'est'. Indeed, instead of having only one wrong idea about themselves (Homais thought himself a positivist and scientist, Madame Bovary thought herself a great romantic heroine born to brilliant and spectacular loves, Bouvard and Pécuchet thought they could acquire all knowledge by reading cheap magazines of pseudo-scientific vulgarization), Svevo's bovaryste heroes tend to have several wrong ideas about themselves, to change shiftlessly from one wrong ambition or interpretation to another, one unsuccessful venture to another. And thus they achieve the too many possibilities which Momigliano criticized and which relate them so closely to Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, another bovaryste. The French critic, Benjamin Crémieux is therefore right when he finds *Una Vita* 'strongly influenced by Flaubert'. But the nature of this influence and its exact significance cannot be found in Svevo's style and subject-matter; it is to be found, as indeed in Musil too, in Svevo's approach to subject and the way he handles it.

In Svevo's first novel, *Una Vita*, the hero Alfonso Nitti is a country lad who, in Trieste, becomes an unimportant employee of the busy Maller Bank; though conscious, at times, of some moral or cultural superiority, he yet feels incompetent and lost in this prosperous and enterprising world. In a moment of weakness or ambition, he becomes the lover of Annie Maller, his rich

employer's daughter, a vain and spoilt culture-snob. Nitti's passion is far more insincere and conscious of its insincerity than Madame Bovary's love for Léon. Annie is also insincere, amused and frightened by her daring; and one gradually realizes the inevitability of their parting. Nitti is reduced, by the insincerity of his love and by the very real misery of such unreal happiness, to a passive listlessness which ends in suicide. This is not, however, the romantic escape of a Werther or a Jacopo Ortis, or of the Romantic poets and heroes of the Milanese *Scapigliatura*. In the age of neo-classical tragedy, the stoical hero had preferred death to slavery or disgrace; later, Werther and the early romantics, aristocratic idealists in an age of bourgeois opportunism, had preferred death, in an act of proud defiance, to the disappointments of an inglorious life; the later Romantics and decadents had sometimes advocated suicide as the *poète maudit's* final affirmation of individuality in a hostile world. All these still were, or tried to be, masters of their own destinies. But Alfonso Nitti's despair goes even further than the confused defeatism of the decadent 'fin de siècle'; weaker and even more completely defeated by reality and his surroundings, he is led to suicide without any will to resist or defy fate, or affirm himself even self-destructively. Life and reality are his enemies; he remains innocent of his own death. In a more consciously modern novel, as in Svevo's later *Zeno*, the suicide of a Guido Speier is but a manifestation of a neurotic drive or of economic pressure, no longer at all of individual reason or will.

The end of *Una Vita* was death; that of Svevo's next novel, *Senilità*, is hallucination, when the hero finds courage and a strange balance while the author gradually develops a new stoicism. *Senilità* reveals another aspect of *bovarysme*: a false literary idealism which, applied to love, makes Emilio Brentani, a weak character afflicted with literary ambitions, believes that Angiolina, a commonplace provincial demi-mondaine, is a veritable Beatrice. Brentani adorns her with all the qualities of the great heroines of literature; but she is gradually dragging him down, as Odette dragged Swann, to her own shoddy level. With the illness and death of Emilio's sister Amalia, a mouse-like spinster whom he neglects but who heroically conceals until her delirium her unrequited love for his best friend, Emilio discovers how shabby his own jealous love has been. He then abandons Angiolina and returns to his futile life of dreams and vague ambitions; in his

mind, he blends Angiolina and Amalia, all the austere qualities of the spinster and the beauty of the whore, and now lives in the imaginary company of a fantastic compound of irreconcilable personalities, real enough to him.

Senilità was published in 1898, five years after *Una Vita*. Critics and readers paid even less attention to it than to Svevo's first novel, though Momigliano, Joyce and others, many years later, declared that *Senilità* was Svevo's best, most subtle and most poetic creation. *La coscienza di Zeno* was published twenty-five years later, in 1923. Did Svevo devote all the intervening years to the creation of his masterpiece? In the preface to the later second edition of *Senilità*, he suggests that he was discouraged by the unsuccess of his second novel and abandoned writing for a long while; and his business, in the difficult years before, during and after the war, certainly claimed much of his time. With *La coscienza di Zeno*, Svevo entered a second period of literary production, in its beginning scarcely more successful than the first. Though Trieste was now Italian, Italian readers were nearly as inaccessible to the Triestine author, whose style was not Tuscan nor regionalistic, as when he had been Austrian. Thanks to Joyce, however, a fragment of the new novel appeared in French, in *Le navire d'argent*, early in 1926; the complete translation was then published by the *Nouvelle revue française* in 1927. Its success, in Paris, was immediate and at once brought Svevo fame even in Italy. In 1926 alone, over fifty articles praised Svevo's work in Italian newspapers and periodicals, more than twice as many as had yet been devoted to him in his whole literary life. During the remaining two years of his life, Svevo was perhaps one of the most discussed and fêted writers in Europe; since his death, his fame has somewhat diminished, though he still influences the style of a few much younger men, such as Alberto Moravia whose *Gli indifferenti* is, in many ways, similar to *Una Vita*, though it may have been influenced only by the same sources, such as Flaubert and the Viennese psychologists.

The work of Svevo's second period, *Zeno* and the stories, distinguishes itself from the earlier work by a greater subjectivity in the treatment of the hero, who tells his story in the first person both in *Zeno* and in the unfinished *Il vecchione*, and by a greater objectivity in the treatment of detail, incident, setting and reality. The characters are thus better integrated and their

doubts and hesitations seem more justified, more clearly motivated by their experiences; and their misfortunes, though no less poignant, seem less tragic or even frankly humorous, according to the mood of the reader of these tragic comedies. Though still maladjusted, Svevo's later heroes are eternally and innocently hopeful in their misfortunes, and Zeno even wonders how man ever wandered into this world where he is so obviously a stranger.

Zeno Cosini is a sub-human type, the very antithesis of the Wagnerian or Nietzschean supermen whom d'Annunzio and other Italian novelists tried to portray. Yet Zeno finds, in his own degradation, helplessness and clumsiness, a real greatness and triumph, far more human than the arrogance of the heroes of D'Annunzio's *Il Fuoco* or *Il Piacere*. Zeno is indeed, as Crémieux aptly remarked, of all Svevo's characters, a sort of Triestine brother of Charlie Chaplin; and this little sub-man becomes a real superman through his stoical consciousness of his weakness which allows him to overcome them. This consciousness is the only greatness that man, through humility, can ever hope to attain; without it, the superman is a fool or a phoney, wrestling blindly with fate and both preparing and hastening the fall which his arrogance deserves. Federico Sternberg defines the fragile happiness of Zeno as 'the balance of the unbalanced'. Momi-gliano compares Svevo's world to that of G. A. Borgese's *Rubé*, 'His characters are intelligent but disoriented . . . and thus unadapted to social living'. This congenital inability to keep in step with the surrounding world (and what intelligent or good man, intent upon eternity, can feel at home in our evil and foolish age?), is the cause of all the unhappiness of Svevo's heroes and precludes the success of all conscious action in their lives; it makes them bungle everything that they ever attempt and leaves them pleasantly surprised when chance or unconscious action suddenly produces success. They are relegated to the margin of social and economic activity where, instead of acting, they generally dream, analyse and comment the action of others or the workings of chance. And this detachment is a characteristic too, of many Austrian heroes, such as Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, or Schnitzler's *Leutnant Gustl*, Rilke's *Malte Laurids Brigge* and K. the anonymous hero of Kafka's *The Castle* and *The Trial*; it is also found in some characters of Luigi Pirandello, whose *Il fu Mattia Pascal* is made unfit for human intercourse,

much like Adalbert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl*, but arbitrarily and by accident, through no fault or choice of his own, by the mere news of his own death, whereby he officially ceases to exist. Svevo's characters, however, were born unfit for life; their misfortunes are not caused by chance, nor by will.

The structure of *Zeno* illustrates a new departure in the technique of novel-writing. With no true continuity of time and narrative, the book unfolds as a series of detached episodes or essays which all, except for the preface, are written by Zeno in the first person. The preface is added by the psycho-analyst who has been treating Zeno and who first introduces him to the reader: 'I had hoped that the autobiography would be a good prelude to his analysis'; but Zeno had then refused to continue the treatment and, if only to annoy the former patient, the analyst is now publishing the autobiography in spite of its uncomplimentary allusions to himself and his science.

Svevo's style too, has changed since his earlier works: it seems even more prosy, its tone almost conversational. But this is a subtle stylization, such as that which Archibald MacLeish has called 'an inversion of naturalness which uses natural utterance for satiric and subjective ends.' Choosing his words objectively from the speech of his contemporaries, Svevo uses them as do, Auden and Kafka so that their meaning no longer tends only outward, as in ordinary discourse, but inward too, towards the subjective worlds and the private configurations of emotion and meaning in the minds of the writer and his readers. It is perhaps significant that both Svevo and Auden studied modern Austrian psychology and that Auden, at one time, was very much interested in the theories of *Gestalt* which may have influenced also the work of Svevo and Kafka.

Many critics have indicated the influence of Freud on Svevo; but Zeno's analysis is not strictly Freudian, though its method, that of writing an autobiography for the analyst, may have been determined by the fictional or formal considerations rather than by psycho-analytic theory. Each chapter of *Zeno* presents a group of memories and experiences which seem to crystallize around one central episode, such as the father's death or Zeno's marriage, which also determines its title; and although these episodes, together with the memories and considerations that they occasion are presented with an appearance of chronological

order, the story yet tends to disregard time and to adopt a form of circular expansion, reaching out in all directions, past, present and future, from each central episode, instead of following the simple line of traditional narrative. The order of Svevo's minor episodes is often determined by their psychological significance, or their emotional relationship to other episodes: Proust, at the Guermantes ball in *Le temps retrouvé*, lost all sense of time and confused grown daughters with their mothers whom he had known years earlier; in *Il vecchione*, Svevo's aged hero mistakes a girl whom he sees in the present for one whom he knew in the distant past, now a woman as old as himself, and remarks: 'I am not able to find my way very surely in time.'

Zeno experiences this same uncertainty in time, when he tries in the *Preamble*, to write his autobiography. He had read a psycho-analytic text-book, followed its instructions, prepared paper and pencil. But his experiment fails. In a sleepy chaos of boredom and doubt, the promised resurrection of the past refuses to materialize; finally Zeno abandons his pursuit of the past, since he is now so far from the images which should precede sleep, and decides to repeat the experiment on the morrow.

The second episode, *Smoking*, describes Zeno's success: the past is recaptured, through no conscious effort, but by a natural weakness which leads Zeno, as so often before, to ponder the problem of his dreadful addiction to tobacco. The whole past suddenly unfolds from the memory of an old-fashioned cigarette-package, bearing the Austrian crest of the double-headed eagle, of a type that is no longer sold in Trieste. Proust remembered the whole past of Combray when he tasted a *madeleine*, dipped in tea, like those that he used to eat when he visited his old aunt in her house there; Zeno's memories, in the same manner, now follow this memory of his first cigarettes. He had intended to write his autobiography, following the laws of factual causality, *ab ovo*; now he discovers that his whole life, all his emotional development and unhappiness, seem to have been determined by his smoking. Oscar Wilde once said that he could resist everything except temptation; and Zeno tells us how, unable to cure himself of smoking by merely refusing to smoke, he was forced to adopt the more drastic course of having himself interned in a nursing-home, which involved him in bribing and seducing the nurse to procure himself some cigarettes, then in suspecting

his wife of betraying him with the doctor and finally in escaping, by night, like a criminal from a prison or a lunatic from an asylum.

Zeno's resurrection of the past seems almost necromantic: he identifies his own birth with that of the vice which, he thinks, has wrecked his life. He thus establishes some sympathetic connection between the beginnings of consciousness and those of guilt. Until this moment, when all became clear and logical, his vague memories refused to crystallize: Proust was likewise unable to remember anything significant until he tasted his *madeleine*. As in Paul Valéry's verse, '*Entre le vide et l'événement pur*', between the empty or impotent will to remember and the actual birth of memories, there is an unexplainable blank that even Proust and Svevo were unable to explain logically. This is the 'Let there be light', the cabbalist's mystery of the original gesture of Genesis, the eternally missing link in the chain of rational causality. And just as these two great artists, Proust and Svevo, were both forced to rely on chance to provide them with a beginning, so were they also both unable to find, in the material that they handled, any satisfactory end. For the novel which pretends to be an imitation of its hero's whole conscious life cannot hope to begin at his birth and record everything logically until his death; birth and death are the two points where the artist must rely on chance in plot or on some arbitrary formal device of art. Proust thus makes his novel end circularly where he begins to write the autobiography which becomes his novel; and Zeno's autobiography ends with the psycho-analytic treatment which forced him to write it.

My father's death, the next episode of *Zeno*, is a macabre mixture of tragedy and farce: in an over-eager effort to follow the physician's instructions, Zeno was perhaps responsible for his father's death, though his death was already inevitable. The doctor had said that the dying man must keep absolutely still; but the father is restless in his bed and Zeno tries to keep him still by force. In an angry attempt to strike his son, the old man dies. Zeno had always quarrelled with his father and caused him much worry; he is now overcome by guilt-feelings and, acutely conscious of how disappointing he has always been as a son, even accused himself of having killed his father.

The story of my marriage then tells how Zeno, unable to extricate himself from a misunderstanding or a deliberately planned

trap, is forced to marry, without loving her, the second and ugly Malfenti daughter, a girl who really loves him, after he had been refused by the eldest and the third, both of whom he loved; and then, in this woman who was not even of his own choice, Zeno finds the ideal wife.

The reader thus gradually realizes Zeno's weakness and incapacity. Zeno's natural enemies are all healthier and more successful people; even his wife's little sister, a healthy child, persecutes him by whispering into his ear that he is insane. Guido Speier, at first Zeno's rival and then his brother-in-law, represents the opposite type of the more virile 'extrovert' who takes his successes for granted and, at first, seems to achieve them with ease; the hero of *Senilità*, Emilio Brentani, had found just such a contrary in Balli, 'uomo nel vero senso della parola, il Balli . . . quando si trovava accanto il Brentani, poteva avere il sentimento di essere accompagnato da una delle tante femmine a lui soggette.' In Svevo's earlier novels, the introvert hero remains unsuccessful; in *Una Vita*, Nitti is finally defeated by his rival when Annie Maller jilts him to marry Macario; in *Senilità*, there is no competition, but Brentani is forced to observe Balli's more successful adjustment. In the later novels, the introvert is successful: the hero of *The Hoax* makes a fortune out of the trick whose victim he was supposed to be and Guido Speier, in *Wife and Mistress*, the next chapter of *Zeno*, gets involved in a series of foolhardy adventures which, in *A Business Partnership*, lead him to bankruptcy and suicide. Thus Zeno, though convinced of his own clumsiness and impotence, yet manages to betray his wife and to have a mistress, without experiencing any trouble, whereas his brother-in-law Guido, with his amorous intrigues, stands endless jealousies and complications.

When he wrote *Zeno* and the other works of his second period, Svevo had, it seems, become reconciled to his own helplessness and to the inevitable duality of intention and achievement, character and surroundings, ambition and real life; his heroes are much happier than in his earlier works and, though no better fitted for life than Alfonso Nitti or Emilio Brentani, are treated less hard by fate, causality and their surroundings; they even sometimes achieve success, though much to their surprise and rarely as a result of planned effort. In *Una Vita*, it is Nitti, the hero, who commits suicide; in *A Business Partnership*, the next

chapter of *Zeno*, the hero, so convinced of his own inefficiency, yet never loses his head, whereas Guido, the 'virile extrovert' becomes hysterical and commits suicide like any disappointed seamstress; and it is the introvert who then saves the widow's fortune. In *The Hoax*, probably written not much later, Svevo tells how an elderly bank-clerk with literary ambitions is misled, by a practical joker, into accepting a phoney contract for the German translation of his early novel; he then sells the royalties 'forward' and, owing to the inflation of the Austrian currency, finds that thanks to this valueless contract, he had made a small fortune in Italian currency, like any 'bear' in the foreign exchange market, though he would never have dared to gamble in this manner without the contract. In *Wife and Mistress*, Zeno had similarly earned his father-in-law's admiration by forgetting to sell some shares whose value was rapidly falling, then selling them at a profit months later, when their value had risen again and Malfenti had already sustained a considerable loss by selling 'at the right moment'.

In the last chapter, *Psycho-analysis*, Zeno describes how, pursued throughout life by a feeling of maladjustment, disease or madness, he finally consults a psycho-analyst and finds him far more mad than himself. Nor is this a factual criticism of psycho-analysis or of analysts in general; it is rather a necessary element of Svevo's dialectical plot. The analyst tells Zeno to write an autobiography; the order in which the memories return to the patient and the configurations which they form in his mind may reveal their significance and the source of his neurosis. When the analyst finally tells Zeno that he is cured but must continue his treatment for 're-education', Zeno protests that he is not cured, refuses to continue his treatment and stops writing his autobiography; but at this point the war separates Zeno from his family, analyst and business-manager, all of whom have fled Trieste. And he now finds himself perfectly adjusted and cured, even successful as a business man in very hard times. From Switzerland, the analyst then writes to Zeno that he is not cured and asks for the remaining sections of the autobiography, which Zeno hastens to write and send. . . .

Zeno concludes that all humanity is evil and foolish. He then describes, in a fable to end all fables, what will be the end of our world. But his Day of Jehoshapat is no longer Dante's:

'When all the poison gases (of the war) are exhausted, a man, made like all other men of flesh and blood, will in the quiet of a room, invent an explosive of such potency that all the explosives in existence will seem like harmless toys beside it. And another man, made in his image and in the image of all the rest, but a little weaker than them, will steal that explosive and crawl to the centre of the earth with it, and place it just where he calculates it would have the maximum effect. There will be a tremendous explosion, but none will hear it and the earth will return to its nebulous state and go wandering through the sky, free at last from parasites and disease.'

In the difficult decline of the Roman Empire, when civilization, as now, seemed to be menaced from within by itself as much as from without by barbarians, educated Romans began to believe that the end of the world was near; some turned to the pessimistic doctrines of Augustinian Christianity, which affirmed that man was foolish and evil, others to the pagan doctrines of Zeno the Stoic, who explained that the world, every few thousand years, sank into chaos and flames to rise again, purified and now, as a phoenix from its own ashes. Svevo was perhaps thinking of the Stoic when he chose Zeno as a name for his hero; and Zeno Cosini is certainly far more stoical, in his misfortunes, than Svevo's earlier heroes. In *Il vecchione*, the hero is a very old man, stoically at peace with the world. Had Svevo, an old man, finished his last novel, it would have contrasted clearly with *Senilità*, his youthful anticipation of old age. All passion spent, Svevo found peace, wisdom, mature strength, objectivity, not in hallucination but in reality.

Svevo's plots indeed follow rigidly dialectical schemes which resolve contraries in a steady progression through endless dilemmas, reversals and other devices, from the unhappiness of *Una Vita* or of the beginning of *Zeno* to the happiness of the end of *Zeno* or of *Il vecchione*, from confusion to order, strife to peace. Time thus becomes functional in the narrative, no longer what E. M. Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel*, calls 'and then . . . and then', but a real 'because'. Plot-devices and humour also acquire a structural value and slapstick misunderstandings generate plot rather than adorn it. Few contemporary novelists have treated plot in this 'tragic' and unrealistic manner; and the styles and plots of those who have, Proust, Kafka, Thomas Mann or Musil,

are not always as humorous or as imitative of real life as Svevo's. In Svevo's novels, the strong man, a Guido Speier, turns out to be weak; the weak fool Zeno, or the hero of *The Hoax*, turns out to be strong and wise; the lunatic reveals himself sane; the sane man commits suicide. Such novels acquire what Dante called literal, moral, allegorical and anagogical meaning; and it seems as if the novel has thus at last achieved an art-form which allows its action, without extraneous commentary, to illustrate deep philosophic thought and conviction.

SELECTED NOTICES

The Inquest. By Robert Neumann. (Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.)

The Power House. By Alex Comfort. (Routledge, 10s. 6d.)

If one allows the claim made by the blurb writer that *The Inquest* 'reveals the tragedy of our generation, the frustration of our time and its ultimate conquest', Messrs. Hutchinson have certainly made an appropriate choice in selecting Robert Neumann's novel to introduce their new series of works by international authors.

Unfortunately, however, the book fails to do what is claimed for it; at any rate in so far as the last words of the quoted phrase are concerned. The promised revelation of conquest does not appear.

Material of tragedy and frustration is provided abundantly. There is almost a plethora of deaths, brutalities, injustices, incarcerations: all the hideous array to which 'our generation' has, through familiarity, become tragically inured. But it is in the familiarity-bred toughness, the callous shell obligatorily and in self-preservation assumed, wherein our tragedy lies, rather than in the actual circumstances of horror.

Mr. Neumann seems not to take this view. He does not, apparently, believe that the psychological reactions of human beings to their environment are of much more vital interest than the environment itself. He does not realize that characters come fully alive only through the elucidation of subconscious tensions which determine the basic patterns of human behaviour. A writer must speak, as it were, the language of the subconscious before he can produce his best work. And this is true, not only of such writers as Kafka and James Joyce, who communicate by means of a dream or fantasy medium, but also of those who describe the external happenings of the outer world. Even in stories of action employing a realistic technique, the source of genuine interest springs from an understanding of the fundamentals of personality. It is the interpretation of complexes, together with their sequence of inevitable events, which gives to any book the truly satisfactory rhythmic progression of music.

And it is because Mr. Neumann does not speak the subconscious language

(in spite of the fact that he sometimes employs the free-association technique) that *The Inquest* fails to satisfy fully. The reader is presented with an intricate train of incident without clue to the motivating forces behind. He is given an account of happenings divorced from their origins.

The result is a confused formlessness in the story of the writer Shilling; of the girl, casually loved by him, whose death causes him to embark upon an exploration of her past; of the unhappy Ventura, so long imprisoned in the barbed wire cages of varied convictions; and of the other characters whose lives twist erratically, through frustration and violence indeed: but towards what conquest?

The fashionable word 'generation' appears again in the blurb of *The Power House*, united this time with the adjective 'new'. Here we are informed that Alex Comfort 'is the voice of a new generation, a voice of protest rising in anger, a voice of despair redeemed by an urgent sense of beauty'.

If I were in Mr. Comfort's place I think I should be something less than delighted by the rather phoney phraseology of this blurb writer who, earlier in his eulogy, refers to the book as dealing with, among other 'huge issues', 'issues of social good and social evil'. A social issue, by which is presumably meant an institution or organization, is either useful or not useful: it cannot be good or evil in a moral sense, and no amount of enthusiasm for Mr. Comfort's work will make it so. Nor do I think it fair to an author still in the middle twenties, and therefore of necessity not altogether mature, to designate him a 'novelist in the grand manner'.

I am full of admiration for the energy, enthusiasm and industry which, in a period unconducive to creative work, have produced this long and intricately constructed book. If, as I imagine to be the case, Mr. Comfort, in describing life among the workers and soldiers of occupied France, is writing of things he has not experienced personally, he is to be congratulated on a remarkable feat of imagination. His characters are too numerous to become really solid or individualized: but this is to a large extent compensated by a quite extraordinary elaboration of detail in the descriptive passages which in itself conveys an effect of solidity.

In my opinion *The Power House* is important, not so much on a social or propaganda count or because of the obvious fluency and realism of the writing, but in the stimulus which it provides for the consideration of two vital issues.

The first of these issues concerns the present-day tendency, to be formulated objectively as collectivism versus individualism. The word 'Collectivism' in our time has come to mean something more dangerous than group living or group thinking: it includes the concept of the organization of collective units into youth camps, labour camps, and fascist conditions in general. A further extension confronts us with the mechanization of social life; the machine versus the individual man, the wheel against the hyacinth in the heart. And, from a more subjective angle, there is the sadistic-masochistic trend which can, be taken as the subconscious expression of the contemporary group soul.

It is the direct bearing of Alex Comfort's book on this question that makes *The Power House* so intensely significant, and which links it with what has already been said about the language of the subconscious.

The entire book proclaims the isolation of the individualist now: the awful

helplessness, loneliness, of the individual man in our time. It is the saga of the individual defeated and ultimately destroyed by the machine.

The soldier Valtin, who is no soldier at all, describes society in this age as 'a vast criminal conspiracy of lunatics against the minority of the sane'. And after his death his wife says of him: 'he knew perfectly well that if one lives in an asylum one runs the risk of being torn to pieces'.

Another individualist, Claus, greatly experienced in barbed wire enclosures, suffers also from this terrible sense of isolation. He feels himself an anachronism. 'There is no world any longer for people like Claus—like the old monks they sleep in their coffins.' With bitterness he catalogues the equipment of the citizen of tomorrow. 'He knew how to bind a wound, hide a razor blade, escape interrogation by looking daft.'

The machine symbolism emphasized through the book parallels the subconscious situation with beautiful exactitude. Mr. Comfort is not concerned with the perfection of engineering or mathematics. His preoccupation is with the sadistic aspect of mechanization: the machine as destroyer, when he describes the death of the weaver caught by the belt of his loom; as nightmare, when, speaking of the engines of troop trains, 'all these locomotives had wide, hard, birdlike faces, each with its individual expression, of gloom, of unpleasant laughter, or menace'.

The masochistic element is equally prominent in the writer's dream picture. Early in the book sexual love is displaced from the human to the mechanical object. The young workman Fougueux is impotent. He loves his machine La Virginie more than his girl Mélusine. He has 'wiped the image of her flesh out of his head, but instead there was the image of La Virginie's metal'. Later, the displacement is still more precisely stressed. 'In his imagination they moved into one another, the girl to whom he talked, and the engine, over which he could assert his power.' And when he finally achieves potency it is not Mélusine whom he longs for: 'but he wanted the body of La Virginie'.

Here, in terms of the subconscious, are pictured the problems which the young generation must face.

How will the young generation deal with the subconscious situation? That is the second great issue which Alex Comfort's book moves one to consider.

Is the new generation in this country about to follow the catastrophic Continental design, as the quotation at the beginning of *The Power House* seems to suggest? Or will they succeed in escaping catastrophe by sublimating crude sado-masochistic elements into the heightened perceptiveness of analytical powers and non-egotistic social awareness?

We have a right to look to Mr. Comfort, as a typical representative of the young generation, for an answer to these questions. That *The Power House* does not give an unequivocal answer is possibly due to the fact that the author is still in the process of development and incapable as yet of complete objectification. Some ambivalence is noticeable in his work. His preoccupation with the detail of sadistic scenes is disquieting and hints at a bad prognosis. But, on the other hand, his pacifism, his under-dog sympathies, his advocacy of a league of the weak against 'all citizens, armies . . . jailers, orators and fools', encourages the belief that he and his contemporaries may avoid the soulless mechanism of disaster and follow the way of individual inner development.

I cannot end these notes without a protest to the publishers about the small type in which *The Power House* is printed. Paper shortage notwithstanding, to impose such a strain on the reader's eyes is as unfair to him as to the book.

ANNA KAVAN

CORRESPONDENCE

'THE MINIMUM WORKING HYPOTHESIS'—A Criticism

As a humanist and scientist (or at least a student of Natural Science) I should like to take issue with Aldous Huxley on several points.

The scientific humanist is non-sentimental in that he does not recognize the existence of a distinct 'purely spiritual experience'. He does not, cannot admit a consciousness other than through sensory perception.

There may, it is agreed, be sense experience the nature of which is at present unknown, but the scientific humanist must insist that it is susceptible to the same approach, investigation, and ultimate formulation as any other phenomena of natural science.

While I am neither Catholic, Jew nor Moslem, I feel also that they would not admit their creeds as 'working hypotheses' or 'motives'. They surely constitute for them the 'explanatory theory' and incorporate the 'resultant action' (whether well-founded is an issue for separate consideration).

Their basic 'infallible intuitions' are so remote from the normal scientific process as to raise obvious query. By what signs shall we know them from the works of the lower psychics and indeed the charlatans if they are not susceptible to any direct examination and analysis?

The chief failing of this statement, however, seems to be the interpretation of humanism used, involving as it does the imposition of non-existent limitations of scope.

Humanism simply as a logical credo cannot tolerate the destructive effects of ignorance, vice, or squalid respectability. Through it, and the love, knowledge and ultimate identification of each man with his fellows, all those objects will be attained which A.H. would desire. But as they would derive from the integration of personal relationships there would simultaneously be a heightening of appreciation and extension of the *Spielraum* of every individual.

They would still want their 'good time' but it would consist in a true progressive quest for the desirable ends which are capable of realization, not in the anti-social act.

The restriction would not be imposed by a remote 'Clear Light' which 'a persistent few might see'—whose principle is communicated in a religious hypothesis in default of which appear lunatic idolatry or futility and despair.

Rather it would arise from the desire to contribute to the ends of truth and beauty which all, not just a few, can see and recognize as worthy.

And with this conviction and the anarchic self-disciplined universal effort which must accompany a humanist conception of life there would be no risk. Man is his own salvation. Let him realize this, let him discard the dogma. Then he would no longer court the disasters that indeed throughout recorded history he has so far brought upon himself.

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